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JULY

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the Magazine of the Arts for

Connoisseurs and Collectors

LONDON

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE ARTS FOR CONNOISSEURS AND COLLECTORS

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CURRENT SHOWS AND COMMENTS

MEN AND MEASURES

BY
PERSPEX

THREE is one deeply significant poem by Francis Thompson which might with advantage be meditated upon by all writers and speakers upon art. It is called "A Judgement in Heaven" and its theme is one of cosmic toleration:

"Heaven, which man's generations draws,
Nor deviates into replicas,
Must of as deep diversity
In judgement as creation be.
There is no expeditious road
To pack and label men for God
And save them by the barrel-load."

It is noteworthy that if the second metaphor in that stanza derives from Billingsgate, the first comes from art, with a vision of God Himself as the master artist creating the innumerable individuality of His creatures and being forced by the logic of divine justice to judge each one according to the law inherent in its being.

I occasionally murmur those lines to myself when I read one of those magnificently sweeping judgments upon the nature of art which are the paradoxical fashion of our time in spite of the "deep diversity" of its creation. Art is this; art is that; art is the other thing: the labels go on to the barrels in most reckless fashion, with an amazing disregard of the refusal of any but the worst artists to "deviate into replicas." Even that isn't true; as art historians know to their woe when they are dealing with those periods before the most important thing about a picture was a good visible signature. We should have been saved a deal of research if the Italian masters had not also been pupils, content

— sometimes throughout their whole lives—to do replicas of the traditional work of their time and place. And almost all the greatest art of the East operates exquisitely within an orbit of repetition. Safest to say, therefore, that all generalisations about art are suspect—including this generalisation.

For how shall we logically pack into the same barrel, say, the Canaletto "Festival on the Grand Canal, Venice," which I personally found to be one of the thrills of the Antique Dealers' Fair, and "Procession" by Edward Burra at the Leicester; or Monet's "La Débâcle des Glaces," one of the finest works of Impressionism which is in the Exhibition of XIXth Century French Masters at the Lefèvre, and Michael Ayrton's brittle and ultra-cerebral "Vines before Easter" at the Redfern? All these, and a surprising number of other works which I have seen during recent visits to galleries, are aesthetically moving works judged by the standards implicit in each of them; probably all are almost entirely wrong if judgement be based on the criteria of the others.

The Canaletto was outstanding among the pictures at Grosvenor House; although perhaps that does not sufficiently indicate its quality, for the Fair does not, in my opinion, give nearly sufficient show to pictures. I sometimes wonder whether it

would not be possible to organise as a further annual event another Fair devoted entirely to paintings by Old Masters. As it is, the picture dealers tend rather to be swamped by the rival antiques and works of craftsmanship, though Frank Sabin, Leger's, Ellis and Smith, the Parker Gallery, and Leslie Hand have stands devoted to pictures or fine prints, and a few other exhibitors include them. This record of the Water Carnival at Venice is an important work even for Canaletto: a period piece built up of the innumerable details exactly observed and reproduced in the master's inimitable manner. Such a subject with its crowded gay life of the time, its opportunity to depict a long vista of the Grand Canal, and its slight air of fantasy, would have had an irresistible appeal to Canaletto. So, for those who love him, here is the master at his most typical.

Giovanni Antonio Canaletto whom we call Canaletto was to this XVIIIth century Venetian Festival as faithful a recorder as was to Derby Day on Epsom Downs, Victorian W. P. Frith, whom we call all manner of derogatory things these days.

The mention of Derby Day reminds one that Ellis & Smith were showing at the Fair a selection of the sporting pictures in which they specialise; and, more especially, that they have been holding at their Grafton Street Gallery an entertaining exhibition of the work of Henry Alken, whose drawings and water-colours of racing, hunting, and shooting stand so high in the essentially English art of the sporting picture. If I confess that I am personally allergic to all this field life it does not prevent me from an appreciation of the delicacy, the humour, and indeed the liveliness of Alken's work. I can understand, if I can

not share, the enthusiasm of his admirers, the charm of the drawing in such a picture as "Fox Hunting—Gone Away" which I enjoy even though I sincerely hope the hunted animal will discreetly stay away. *Chacun à son goût*: which is at least practising the principle of toleration which I am advocating in this article. The sporting picture is what "Ben Tally Ho" Alken, as he was affectionately known, wished to do; it is what he could do extremely well; and we get the meaning of it only if we are looking at it through his eyes and mind.

The eyes and mind may be entirely different from our own. Take Edward Burra, who has his exhibition at the Leicester Gallery. His mentality seems so macabre, so utterly sinister. He sees the world as an underworld; a haunt of threateningly brutal creatures who, at their best, look like executioners. In some of the new works they perform strange rites with a vast kettle from beneath the lid of which two eyes peer balefully. One bears the title "It's all boiling up." It may be that such a mood and so menacing a title express something we all feel about the civilisation in which we live; but this may not be Mr. Burra's idea at all, for he manages to make the most simple Dublin street look as if the nastiest possible work were going on "to all men's



FÊTE ON THE GRAND CANAL, VENICE

By ANTONIO CANALETTO.

Exhibited by the Leger Galleries at the Antique Dealers' Fair.

PERSPEX's choice for the Picture of the Month.

APOLLO

bane." We look again and see that it is approximately quite an ordinary Dublin scene with that gay, if quick-tempered, people pursuing their ordinary avocations.

One is thrilled by the absolute power over his medium which Edward Burra always reveals. The technical problems of handling water-colour on the scale which he affects are tremendous; but almost every picture embodies passages of lyrical beauty, an Irish slum and its adjacent ruined buildings, for example, becoming in his hands a world of romance expressed in delicate colour. There is something theatrical and rather forced about his painting, and it is not without interest that he is showing an amount of scene design for ballet. That theatricality is both his strength and his weakness: it compels us while we look at each picture to accept it, and it causes us when we escape to the light of common day and the banal realities of Leicester Square to react from its unreality.

The other exhibition at the Leicester is avowedly romantic, presenting paintings and drawings by the Victorian Romantics. The best of them are that group of artists who were loosely gathered around Blake during his final years: Samuel Palmer (how good he is at his best!); Calvert; Richmond, who is usually too soft and woolly; Linnell, who was not only Blake's one understanding patron, but an excellent romantic artist. With these are a number of the Pre-Raphaelite group—there are two splendid Rossetti drawings. Particularly interesting were a few works by that strange artist Richard Dadd, whose large "Flight into Egypt" is a fairly recent possession of the Tate. Dadd's genius as an artist was a curious product of a mind which was broken by homicidal mania: he killed his father in the family park in Surrey, escaped to France, attempted another murder, was captured and sent to a criminal asylum. There he was wisely permitted to continue his art, and one of the drawings at this exhibition is signed and dated from Bethlehem asylum. There is a growing interest in Dadd's work, which is straightforward painting or Biblical illustration typical of the mid-XIXth century and shows nothing of the alienist.

The reaction to this whole show of Victoriana bears upon the theme of toleration. One advanced critic "believed" he espied Watts' "Love Locked Out." He records it like a man who has witnessed a criminal act and doesn't want to get mixed up with the police. His shuddering retreat from the narrowly escaped contagion can be imagined. With the daring of a less sensitive mind I boldly looked at the Watts picture (actually it was a version of "Love and Death") and enjoyed it, accepting the fact that Watts painted that kind of subject in that kind of way. If Watts lived to-day he might have envisioned the subject like several shattered mirrors, and been acclaimed a genius. As it happened he was a good Victorian, much influenced by the opulent colouring of the Venetian masters, and given to inventing a new mythology of abstractions as figures to convey his XIXth century philosophy. The painting and the philosophy, let it be granted, is suave; for the Victorians when they found that it was "all boiling up" used it to drive a steam-engine, whereas we wait for an explosion. They were evolutionists moving forward "from precedent to precedent"; we are revolutionaries going round in circles.

In complete contrast to this romantic mood is the exhibition of Michael Ayrton's work at the Redfern Gallery. There is nothing suave about this artist: he sees everything in a clear, hard light, and defines it with a clear, hard line. His draperies have an almost Byzantine formalisation, whether it be the strange garment in which William Walton poses for an excellent portrait, or the knickerbockers of Italian boys gathering vines. He is fascinating in that he has so obviously worked through to a vision entirely his own—or rather is working through, for I do not feel that even yet he has entirely succeeded in creating pictures so much a world in themselves that there is no doubt about what he wants or his power to achieve it. The self-contradiction in some of the works is immediately apparent because Michael Ayrton does not slur anything. He draws cleanly the forms (not uninfluenced by Wyndham Lewis, who contributes an enthusiastic foreword to the catalogue), and clearly we find naturalism and distortion inextricably mixed in one painting. A vine-dresser's arm will be grotesquely foreshortened in a work otherwise almost entirely naturalistic; a passage of realistic painting will intrude into a creation otherwise entirely styleised. In the case of the "Portrait of William Walton," which I enjoyed thoroughly, Ayrton had obviously and deliberately used a different approach to the face and hands to that which governed the drapery and the setting: a justifiable variation in a portrait of this kind. In one of the vine pictures the naturalistic treatment of the boy's

body against the distorted forearm gave the unpleasing feeling that the youthful vine-dresser was a spastic.

Judgement must rest upon the artist's intention, but it can only do so when that intention is clear and consistent, especially in the case of an artist of Mr. Ayrton's type which bases its performance upon a crystal clarity. It is that quality which one admires in the work of Wyndham Lewis himself. If one happens not to be personally tuned in to such work that is an understandable loss of contact, but at least the artist knows what he is doing and, at his best, does it. Criticism of Michael Ayrton can be based on his own failure to be true to the intentions expressed in the pictures.

That, maybe, is why we continue to get deep satisfaction from the work of the good Impressionists. Those who have not yet visited the Exhibition of XIXth Century Impressionists at the Lefevre will welcome the fact that it remains open throughout July, and the whole movement and its underlying theory can be studied in these forty pictures, stretching as they do from the sketch by Delacroix for "La Mort de Sardanapale," made in 1826, to work by Cézanne painted after the turn of the century.

It is the fashion these days to echo that stricture upon any Impressionist painter which Cézanne made upon Monet: "He is only an eye." In face of these pictures, particularly of Monet's own contribution to the exhibition, one reacts by feeling how swift and perfect the eye was, and how able the hand to reinterpret the thing seen in terms of paint. The two sea studies, and the masterly study of the Break-up of the Ice on a river are moments of light exactly caught. If Cézanne reacted from this obsession to bring back the lost formalism he nevertheless retained a tremendous amount of the Impressionistic discoveries. The opportunity to see again one of the most typical of his landscapes, "L'Estaque à Travers les Arbres" reminds us of the new thing he was so brilliantly able to do by indicating the volume of his forms in the direction of the brushwork, and with it the old thing which he took from his Impressionist predecessors. The same is true of Gauguin and his decorative qualities. His one work at this Lefevre Exhibition, "Fruits sur une Table," is an entirely satisfying piece. It conveys in itself that happy feeling that the artist has known exactly what he wanted and has succeeded in presenting it.

It is probably that innate quality which so invariably gives us pleasure from so many of the older painters, the reason why we so glibly term them Old Masters. And it is this which comes to us from the truly able water-colourists, for that medium more readily than oil painting reveals the hand that cannot achieve its purpose, and "overdone or come tardy off" tells us at once what the artist aimed at and how far from the mark he is. Of Old Masters the Exhibition at Agnew's demands attention alongside those at Slatter's Gallery and at Larsen's of which I have already written in these columns. The works at Agnew's tend to be fairly small canvases and panels on this occasion, but are none the less delightful. I was particularly thrilled by a little panel by Paul Potter, "A Wood outside the Hague." No Impressionism here, but the XVIIth century Dutch passion for detailed truth so that every leaf on the trees receives its due form and image, its own colour, its exact tone. Marvelously in spite of this concern for the trees and the very leaves upon the trees we are given also the synthesis of the wood. A delightful work, it shows what an excellent landscape artist Paul Potter could be, for on this occasion his characteristic cattle are entirely subordinated to the landscape.

In water-colour the Fine Art Society have their Summer Exhibition of Early English work stretching from Cozens' famous "Villa D'Este" and including a group of more than a score works by Edward Lear executed in the delightfully sketchy manner typical of this artist who never pushed the water-colour medium too far. This show is a roll call of the great names; happily of the lesser names, too, for the English have such command over this medium that they can claim many masters. Most of us feel that this medium is at its happiest in its sketchiest manifestations. There has been at the Leger Gallery an Exhibition of the water-colours of James Holland, and certainly among these it was the absolutely spontaneous and immediate work, splashed unerringly upon the paper, which counted. Holland, indeed, was a water-colourist who eventually suffered from finishing his work too thoroughly. Yet, immediately one has said that one calls to mind others, who carried their work to the extreme of finish, and produced beauty. So even in water-colour we are faced with that "deep diversity" which was our starting point for these notes, and we must not make the error of confusing aim and purpose between artist and artist nor of measuring all with one yardstick.

Four Representations of the Prodigal Son

BY F. M. GODFREY

TOWARDS the end of the XVth century the parable of the Prodigal Son became a favourite subject in northern art. Dürer, Bosch, Holbein, and Rembrandt have each chosen their particular moment of the story which had for them the strongest emotional, psychological, or artistic appeal. Dürer, relying on his phenomenal skill for rendering a wealth of idyllic farmyard-detail, strikes a perfect balance between the rustic and the emotional qualities of the story, Bosch seizes upon the psychological conflict, the heartrending climax in the drama of the Prodigal's conversion, Holbein enlarges upon his stoic composure in the midst of adversity and of suffering, while in Rembrandt's etching the paternal compassion equals the son's agony and dejection.

Dürer must be considered the first to have treated the story in the grand pictorial style. It appealed to his religious propensities and gave scope to his gift for animal-drawing and organisation of space. He had been to Venice in 1494 and the Prodigal is the result of his widened artistic experience. His engraving was much copied in Italy and is honourably mentioned by Vasari. "In another print Dürer represented the Prodigal Son who kneels in the manner of a peasant, wringing his hands, and looks up to heaven, while some swine feed from a trough, and in it there are hovels after the fashion of German villages, most beautiful."

Dürer's Prodigal is neither wretched nor ragged. "He has innocently fallen into misery and carefully turns up his coat before kneeling down in the sty." He is of upright and manly countenance, and while he humbles himself with the swine, fervently prays to the Lord for his deliverance. Steadfast and trusting, he is the ideal Christian of the Reformation, in faith unshaken, in character not unlike the knight who rides alone through a world full of demons and devilry.

The atmosphere of "intense and poetic rusticity" is enhanced by the wonderful composition where the scurrlous forms of the hogs, the



Albrecht Dürer. Engraving, 1495-6.
British Museum.

kneeling figure of the man are set against the deepening prospect of the yard which is framed by timbered barn and pointed gable. Dürer's sense for the science of perspective, his delight in the mathematics of drawing perfectly blend with the dream-like quality of his creation, the quaint pastoral stillness and remoteness of a medieval village in all its Teutonic complexity.

Drawing was Dürer's mother-tongue and his language of line has the character of fanciful ornamentation. The engraver's needle, not the painter's brush, was the most powerful means of his intent. With his vivid and sensitive strokes he was able to express tone as well as direction, contour as well as volume, and by placing dark shadowy forms upon brightly-lit planes, his engraving aspires to the condition of paint.

Almost a generation after Dürer's engraving Holbein treated the subject in a design for a stained-glass window, preserved in the Print Room of the Basle Museum. The Gothic realism of the earlier artist has yielded to a Renaissance conception of form, the Christian temperament to a pagan stoicism. The Prodigal Son walks relentlessly behind his herd of swine through a rich Alsatian landscape. He strides along barefooted, with tattered clothes through which his bare knees protrude, a long staff on his shoulder and his short sword firmly clasped in his hand. He looks through us with a distracted and fateful glance and inadvertently thrusts his staff into the eye of one of his herd. Intrepid and of wiry strength, he is of all the Prodigals in painting the most reckless and the most independent. Bitterness and contempt have hardened the features of him who has wasted his inheritance and devoured his living with harlots and who seeks neither the pity nor the company of men. He bears his ordained suffering in silence, alone with his terrible fate in which the very beasts seem to share. The hopelessness of his plight and his heroic restraint, as he manfully faces danger, misfortune and death move us more than does the innocent righteousness of Dürer's Prodigal Son.

In lieu of Dürer's "complete representation of appearance" a few salient features now suffice to tell the story. The mighty ornamental tree serves to balance the weird shape of the hapless wanderer and to lend depth to the airy mountain distance with castle. The heraldic



Hans Holbein. Heraldic Glass Design, 1520.
Pen and Brush.
Basle : Offentliche Kunstsammlung.

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glass window had to be given a monumental framework of powerful Renaissance design. Its architecture is like a Roman triumphal arch, complete with vault and moulded rosettes, where figures crown the capitals of rounded half-columns. A frame such as this would enhance transparency and aerial perspective of the painted glass. In firm decisive brush-strokes Holbein built up his design, selecting significant form, using colour for shading and scenic background. He had no yearning for the Infinite, no poetic sentiment of the Dürer kind, no mysticism. The world as it came before his vision was limpid and transparent, and he expressed what he had to say with frank simplicity and bold directness.

The "Return of the Prodigal Son" which Bosch painted towards the end of his life is perhaps the most self-revealing and the most melancholy of his pictures. He does not show the Prodigal Son in the embrace of the forgiving father, gladly or grudgingly welcomed by kith and kin, neither in the throes of "riotous living," not in want and in misery, feeding the swine—but has chosen the moment of the greatest psychological impact when the returning wanderer must make the decision between the good life and the bad. His lean, ragged figure is shown in motion. His wounded leg, the weight of his body, his raised arm and hat point towards the paternal gate, but the man himself, tall, haggard, prematurely-aged, looks back over his shoulders to the tumble-down tavern which he leaves behind, with all the vice and the wretchedness that the wayside inn embodies for the improvident traveller.

The Prodigal Son, as he looms large in front of his father's fields that he will cross in spite of conflicting desires, is perhaps the first psychological portrait in the whole history of painting. His is a wistful, melancholy face, possessed image of a soul forlorn in a world where there is no God. Behind this fated apparition are the homely meadows and hills, the flowering tree, the comfortable gate and cow. Against this the painter has set a genre-picture of the utmost dilapidation, the Inn of the Swan, with broken windows and crumbling roof where men and beast seem equally wretched.

The Prodigal Son with unspeakable horror looks back upon his past: the swine at the trough, the vicious dog set dead against him, the soldier caressing some wench in the doorway, while his huge pike leans against the house, the hostess reviling him from the window; the whole uncanny cauldron of evil is now no longer alluring to him.

Marvellously balanced, in the geometrical centre of the picture-



Jerome Bosch. 1460-1516. *Museum Boymans, Rotterdam.*

plane, the shattered frame of the returning son—his face wan and careworn, his eye deep and inscrutable—is drawn irresistibly towards the gate, the fateful gate of his salvation. The grey and silver tones of field and sky are in harmony with the grey rags, the silver hair of the Prodigal who lightly carries his pack towards a better life which his disillusioned eye hardly foresees.

No painter employed greater genius to convey the universal significance of the Parables of the New Testament than Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn. The story of the young man who had strayed from the right path, broken the Covenant with God and with men, and plumb'd the depths of suffering, and of the father who rewarded with all-forgiving mercy the transgressions of such a son—this story contained for Rembrandt the heart and core of the Christian faith.

As a young man of thirty, with scratchy needle, he sketched the group of the compassionate father and the repentant son in an etching of moving simplicity, and thirty years after, in one of his most majestic paintings, he again chose for his subject the forbearing and all-embracing love of this father. Rembrandt did not pursue comeliness in painting and he shifted the emphasis from the romantic predicament of the rich young man turned swineherd to the saintly and solemn beauty of the paternal character. His is a literal interpretation of the twentieth verse in Chapter XV of Luke: "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him," and of verse twenty-two where he said to his servants: "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet."

The idea of great emotional impulse and actual haste on the part of the father is conveyed by his wide step and lifted heel, the sloping posture of his aged frame, the beautiful flowing line of his back. Tenderness and compassion of the noble patriarch are heightened by the excessive brushiness of the son, outcast or leper, half-naked, emaciated, unkempt, who has thrown himself to the ground in prostrate self-abasement. This central group is set against the shadowless wall of the house, a unified arabesque of sustained emotion. With delicate and elusive strokes of the needle Rembrandt has moulded the wild protruding cheekbones of the son, the dark grooves and hollows of his face, the barbarian's overgrowing hair and beard and the father's dignified expression of mute commiseration.

All around this principal foreground group is light, the hazy distance of fields and flocks, the open staircase with servants, lively and hustling denizens of the house bringing shoes and clothing, the inquisitive girl throwing back the shutter. In rapid and nervous execution, by means of a delicate lacework of lines, Rembrandt expresses in sculptural language of form, without depth or decorative detail, on a narrow platform of stone, a human drama of eternal significance and truth.



Rembrandt. Etching, 1636. *British Museum.*

The Cathedral of Sankt Stephan, Vienna

FROM OUR VIENNA CORRESPONDENT

THE catalogue of the Exhibition held in Vienna during the last months of 1948 to illustrate the history, monuments and the restoration of the Cathedral of Sankt Stephan, gave the first detailed account of the circumstances which had led to its partial destruction by fire. This cathedral is not only the greatest monument of Gothic art in Austria, but also the central feature of the geography of the city, and the damage which it suffered in the great fire of April 11th to April 14th, 1945, was the greatest individual disaster brought by the war to the Austrian cultural heritage (Fig. I). The actual cause of the fire has been a matter of dispute, and the question has never been discussed without the vitiating influence of political propaganda. While those who still have national-socialist leanings have accused the Russians, the Communists and, to a lesser extent, the Allies have sought to put the blame on the German S.S. troops who were entrusted with the defence of Vienna against the advancing Russians. The tales of deliberate incendiaryism by one side or the other are now discredited, and it is recognised that in the last resort responsibility must lie with the German High Command, which made the decision to defend Vienna to the last, although it was clear that



Fig. I. The nave seen from the south, with west face of the south tower. Condition after the fire and destruction of roof.

Fig. II (below). The High Altar and apsidal east end, after the collapse of the choir vault.



the city could not be held and would only be submitted to destruction by fire and shell.

As might be expected, the account of the disaster given in the catalogue is, in view of the continued presence of the Russian occupation army in the city, very circumspect in its references to the part played by the Russians both at the time of the fire and since. There is actually no doubt how the fire started. The earlier air raids carried out by the American Air Force on Vienna caused damage of a minor nature to the Cathedral on two occasions, on March 12th, 1945, when a bomb destroyed the north-eastern corner of the upper sacristy, and on April 8th, when a small calibre bomb pierced both roof and vault of the south nave aisle, and another fell by the southern tower, causing external splinter damage. On April 9th and 10th small fires broke out in parts of the roof, caused by sparks from burning buildings in the neighbourhood, but these were put out successfully before they could do any serious damage. On April 11th a row of commercial buildings facing the west front of the Cathedral also caught fire. Popular rumour has attributed this fire to Russian incendiaryism, for their troops were already in partial occupation of the city. Actually, Vienna was at the time under German artillery fire, and it is probable that a shell from a German gun started it. A number of smaller projectiles had torn holes in the tiling of the Cathedral roof, and sparks were carried across from the burning buildings to the west of the Cathedral. Both the wooden scaffolding around the north tower and the timbers of the roof were set on fire in this way. Had the wind been blowing in another direction, the Cathedral might have escaped all further damage. As it was, the scaffolding of the north tower was soon burning strongly, with the result that the beams from which the bells hung burnt through and fell with the bells to the foot of the tower. The important late XIIth century carved wood Wimpassingerkreuz, which owing to its great length (over 20 feet) had been left hanging on the inner wall of the tower, then caught fire and was completely destroyed. The innumerable beams of the great XVth century roof burnt for three days, and burning fragments of wood, falling through the west window of the nave, set fire to the great Baroque organ in the western gallery. Though the organ was destroyed, the fire did not spread beyond this gallery into the interior of the nave. On April 12th the beams supporting the bells in the south tower also caught fire and the largest bell of all, weighing 20,000 kilos, fell to the ground and was shattered. Apart from the organ, the interior had suffered no serious damage after two

days of burning, when, in the early hours of April 13th, a 15-metre-high wall standing on the south arcade of the choir, which supported a part of the timberwork of the roof, collapsed and in falling demolished the masonry of both the central choir vault and the south choir aisle vault. All this masonry, together with a mass of burning fragments, fell on the woodwork of the Gothic choir stalls and the Baroque Imperial Oratory. In this way the Cathedral lost the most precious of its internal fittings. Fortunately, the masonry which fell formed a wall around the fire, thus preventing it from spreading further inside the Cathedral (Fig. II). This completes the list of the damage with the exception of a further incident in November, 1945, when the vault of the eastern bay and the apse of the south choir aisle collapsed (Fig. III). It is in this part of the Cathedral that the famous red marble tomb of the Emperor Friedrich (completed in 1513) was situated, and the masonry fell directly on to the tomb. This was covered with sandbags and planks, and some of the latter, driven by the weight of the falling masonry, caused minor damage to the details of the carving. The catalogue of the exhibition states that this portion of the vaulting fell "without apparent reason." The fact that seven months after the fire such a collapse should have taken the responsible authorities by surprise, did, however, lead to a certain amount of unfavourable comment at the time amongst informed circles in Vienna.



Fig. III. The south choir aisle (Apostle Choir) after the collapse of the vault in November, 1945. Half-covered by debris, the walled-up tomb of the Emperor Frederick III.



Fig. IV. Interior of nave after restoration, with wooden screen wall cutting off the severely damaged choir. Present condition.

The first restoration work was directed to securing the nave, the interior of which, except for the west end, had suffered no damage, since the nave vault had held firm. A flat roof of reinforced concrete was quickly built over the nave and was completed before the onset of the winter 1945-6. It was particularly fortunate that this provisional roof was constructed, for the erection of the permanent roof was to be impeded by difficulties that could not in 1945 have possibly been foreseen. The original frame of the roof was, of course, of timber, dating from the middle of the XVth century. It was built of some 2,000 cubic metres of larch wood, and a restoration in the same material was not a practical possibility. It was therefore decided to erect a steel frame roof which would have approximately the same weight as the original timber one.

The main iron ore deposits of Austria are in Styria, and it was a Graz firm, Waagner-Biro A.G., that was entrusted with the manufacture of the steel girders for the framework. The girders were in due course delivered to the Vienna depot of Waagner-Biro and in August, 1946, the work of erection began. It was continued, slowly, until January, 1947, when it came to a sudden stop. The interruption was at first connected with the unfavourable conditions of working in mid-winter; but as the year 1947 advanced, still no move was made to take up the work at the point at which it had been left. Though the Austrian authorities did their best to keep the facts quiet, and to the best of my knowledge they have never been published, rumours soon spread that it was in fact the Russians who, in addition to looting and wrecking most of the palaces within their zone of Austria, were now hindering the reconstruction of the Cathedral.

The facts of the case appear to have been as follows. The firm of Waagner-Biro was until 1938 Austrian-owned, but after the Anschluss German interests acquired a considerable holding in its capital. Actually, the firm had its works in Styria; that is, in the British Zone of Austria, but the Russians claim as reparations from Austria all German-owned property acquired since 1938 in the eastern half of the country, including, that is, part of the British Zone. The British have not conceded this point and the Russians have not as yet had any reparations out of Styria. By a peculiar misfortune, the Vienna depot of Waagner-Biro, where the steelwork was stored, is in the Russian sector of the city, so that nothing was easier for the Russians than to step in and place an embargo on its removal on the pretext that, as the production of an ex-German-owned firm, it fell to Russia as reparations. It is interesting to observe that the Russians did

THE CATHEDRAL OF SANKT STEPHAN, VIENNA

not think of this immediately, and it was only after the work had been in course for some months that they took this action. As the steelwork was deposited in the Russian sector there was nothing that the other Allies could do, and the Austrians were left the unequal task of making the best terms they could in order to recover from the Russians the material for which payment had already been made in full to Waagner-Biro.

The Viennese have had and are still having many bitter experiences as a result of the Russian occupation of a part of their country, but the Russian refusal to release the steelwork for the Cathedral until the Austrian authorities had agreed to purchase the steel anew, this time from the Russians, hurt them sorely indeed. The dispute became very much a matter of principle, for if the Austrians yielded, it might be taken as implying an acceptance of the Russian claim to all ex-German assets in Eastern Austria, including those outside the Russian Zone. However, rather than postpone the rebuilding of their Cathedral indefinitely, the Austrians accepted the Russian terms and paid over the sum demanded.

The erection of the roof was actually resumed in April, 1948; it is now far advanced over both nave and choir, and is scheduled for completion this year. In view of the time needed to cover the roof with its full complement of 329,000 tiles, a temporary ferro-concrete roof has been constructed over the choir, so that the whole building is now covered. Like most medieval buildings, especially those in large towns, the fabric has had to undergo extensive restoration in the course of the last 100 years. Thus the upper part of the spire on the south



Fig. V. Nave and choir seen from the west door. Condition before the fire.

tower was renewed between 1839 and 1842, and again between the years 1860-64. The mediaeval builders had only completed one of the richly decorated stone gables which run along the nave over the windows, the remainder being merely painted on the blank stone wall. The existing stone tracery over the remaining windows was erected in 1853-6 (Fig. I). Much of the external stonework of the other parts of the building was also renewed in the last decades of the XIXth century. When in December, 1948, the nave of the Cathedral was reopened for public worship, many of the visitors found it difficult at first to recognise. If one looks at any old description of its interior, one reads that it was very dark. The nave windows, all of which dated from the XIXth century, were destroyed by blast, and have been replaced, as a temporary measure, by small panes of glass in pale green, pink, blue and yellow tones, set in leaden quarries. The colour in the glass is in fact very slight, and the windows transmit a warm light, which illuminates the magnificent interior and enables one for the first time since over a hundred years to see the fine series of mediaeval statues it contains. While the light transmitted from the great windows of the nave with their variegated panes is admirable, the effect is less satisfactory to a person looking directly at them. The colours are confused and do not, of course, correspond with the mediaeval colour range. It is intended to replace this coloured glass with colourless panes in due course. As long as the choir was roofless, it was necessary to close the eastern end of the nave and this was done by constructing a great wooden screen across the east end, shutting the choir off completely (Fig. IV).

The erection of this screen has transformed the interior of the Cathedral and largely accounts for the unfamiliar impression that it makes even on the oldest generation of the Viennese. Sankt Stephan was never remarkable for its length (Fig. V), but now one has a feeling of stupendous width and height—in fact the German hall-church on a gigantic scale. With its three aisles of approximately equal width, it seems to conform to the normal hall-church structural plan. Actually the present appearance of the nave, though aesthetically far less pleasing than the former arrangement with uninterrupted vista from west door to the High Altar, is historically accurate. Up till 1489 the choir and nave were quite clearly separated by a pulpitum (Lettner) which occupied the crossing between nave and transept. This pulpitum was demolished before 1489, since when the vista, so beloved of the XIXth century restorers, has been more or less unimpeded.

As a High Altar, the superb XVth century triptych, formerly in the south choir aisle, has been set up. It is actually rather small in size for the vast hall of the nave, but it has been set on a high wooden staging which gives it the necessary dominance over the interior. This altar, which bears the date 1447, was first brought to the Cathedral in 1884 from a monastery in Wiener Neustadt, hence its usual title, Wiener Neustadter Altar. It is



Fig. VI. The Pilgram pulpit with carved wood canopy, now recognised as a font cover. Condition before the fire, with XIXth century glass filling the windows.

APOLLO

one of the earlier of the great series of XVth century altars in carved wood still preserved in Austria. Its early date can be seen from the form of the elaborate canopy and the tabernacle work which crown it. These elements have not yet taken on the naturalistic forms of late Gothic mannerism which were to make nonsense of the buttresses and pinnacles of Gothic architectural ornament. The original High Altar of the Cathedral (Fig. II), a somewhat undistinguished Baroque structure of the 1640's, survived the fire. Having been *in situ* for three hundred years, it is certain to retain its place when the choir and sanctuary are used again, though its height and bulk are such that the important XIVth century glass in the apse windows is much obscured. This glass in the apse is all that survives of the great quantity of mediaeval glass which must have once filled the windows of both nave and choir. The destruction of the XIXth century glass and the insertion of clear glass has meant that we shall see the Cathedral much as it appeared during the Baroque period, for it was not till the XVIth century that the mediaeval glass was removed. One is prepared to face the loss of the XIXth century glass with the less concern on account of the splendid quality of the XIVth, XVth and XVIth century sculpture with which the interior of the nave is filled and which can now be seen without difficulty.

One alteration which cannot fail to strike anyone familiar with the pre-war appearance of the interior is the removal of the wooden canopy from above the pulpit of Anton Pilgram (Fig. VI). It was not difficult to see that the canopy was earlier in style than the pulpit, and it has now been recognised that it belongs, in fact, to the early XVth century font whence it must have been removed at some later date in order to provide a sounding board for the pulpit. In spite of considerable opposition, it has now been replaced over the font.

It is estimated that the work of restoration will not be completed until 1955, by which date the fabric of the building will look the same as it did before the fire.

• • •

Notes on a Drawing by Alfred Stevens

VISITORS to the recently assembled exhibition in the Stevens Room at the Tate Gallery will no doubt have felt particular interest in a sheet of drawings exceptional in their time, and remarkable in any period for their vigorous abstraction. The figure, drawn in three aspects, is a preliminary statement for the Caryatides of the dining-room mantelpiece for Dorchester House, near which in the Gallery this study is placed. The pose is actually that of the finished sculpture on the spectator's right, but a mirror-image; and the reversed disposition of the limbs reveals very clearly the thematic unity of the two Caryatides.



The drawings are strikingly unlike this master's other known works in the medium, having perhaps a closer affinity with those for the "Faerie Queen" panels both in manner and intention than with others here exhibited; setting forth the emergent conception where the others are rather concerned with the recording of observed

expressive appearance. Possibly for this reason the page is the only one of its kind still extant; Stevens, as Mr. K. Romney Towndrow points out in his biography of the artist, never intended his work as a draughtsman to be other than working material, and while studies from life might be kept by him as having a future usefulness, the basic conception of an achieved work is a different matter, related in the form given only to the completed object, and from Stevens' point of view thenceforward obsolete.

From our own point of view, however, this study is far from obsolete: to the eye primarily sympathetic to XXth century art—a not unusual bias—it is immediately impressive by reason of its abstraction and concentration. The qualities of repose, strength and vitality which were to inform the sculpture are here given with economy, directness and with great subtlety of inter-relationship carried through the swift rhythms. Here line and space is expressively organised and the associative elements arising from the representation of the figure are restricted to those of poise, stress and tensions free from the irrelevancies of naturalism or the suspect blandishments of "idealised beauty." Such beholders are likely to feel the latter defect in the finished marbles which "unfortunately . . . were worked upon and 'smoothed' after Stevens' death"; but in the plaster models belonging to the Victoria and Albert Museum the "working out" of the subject can better be appreciated. Two changes have occurred in the process. In the first place certain adjustments have been made as the sculpture, which though thought of "in the round" is first stated two-dimensionally, was given solid form; the calligraphic rhythms of the drawing become the slower-moving drama of light on a third-dimensional object. The drapery is differently arranged, instead of a falling swirl from shoulder to pelvis turning on itself before descending to the final convolutions around the base, the shadow caught in the bent arm takes the importance first given to the upper flow of drapery, which here crosses both the hips diagonally, emphasising relationships of direction within the concavity of the stooping pose—which has become more accentuated by the particularisation of the head. The other change which I would suggest is the fusion of the personal statement with the fully externalised object for existence in society. Its utilitarian purpose was decorative, as a detail of the magnificent mantelpiece in a room planned as a whole, and in this it complies with the Renaissance tradition. To assume that in external considerations ruinous concessions were inevitable is to deny, I think, the strength and breadth of treatment extant in the plaster; though deplorable sacrifice has been made, in my opinion, to surface finish in the marble.

Because of its uniqueness there might appear to be some danger of misunderstanding the drawing, of interpreting as intention what was in fact fortuitous appearance. Those who, finding it difficult to accept draughtsmanship so seemingly "modern" as intentionally so in implication, might argue that this example had never importance further than a "roughing out" of compositional generality. To say this one would need to overlook the inherent vitality of the drawing, but it is fortunate that the three aspects occur together; had each been on a separate sheet it is improbable that they would have survived for correlation. The three, however, bear out fully the intentional use of the idiom, astonishing as it may be, and that for Stevens himself this was not an isolated phenomenon is strongly suggested by a consideration of the "Faerie Queen" drawings to which reference has already been made. To discuss on the evidence of this rediscovered drawing what Stevens might have done had circumstances been other than they were is fruitless, though its power and originality may convince us profoundly of our loss. But its exhibition, apart from offering to us its immediate interest and delight, may provide a particularly accessible approach through which the contemporary mind can best find its way to an appreciation of Stevens' work and its place in a still living tradition.

LYN BIRTLES.

• • •
GIUSEPPE CERACCHI

Dear Sir,

I am preparing a study on the life and works of Giuseppe Ceracchi (1751-1801), the Italian sculptor who lived in England for four years and who exhibited a number of works at the Royal Academy in the years 1776-1779. I should appreciate hearing from any of your readers who might know the present location of any of Ceracchi's work or documents relating to his life.

Sincerely,

Editor,
APOLLO.

LAWRENCE JAMES WATHEN.
The Graduate College,
Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey.

JAPANESE COLOUR-PRINTS—THE LAST GREAT MASTER (cont.)

IV. LANDSCAPE

THIS branch of Kuniyoshi's work has always evoked a chorus of well-merited approval from the authorities. "In the field of landscape," says Von Seidlitz, "he developed a strength and greatness of style which give him a place perhaps even above Hiroshige." Binyon and Sexton agree with him: "It is to be regretted that he did not make more landscape prints. The few that he produced are so fine that they are comparable with Hiroshige's best." Gustave Geffroy, in *Artistic Japan* No. 33 (1891), writes of "sumptuous and melodramatic compositions by Kuniyoshi, in which the landscapes assume the appearance of a transformation scene in a pantomime," and even the delicate aesthetic digestion of Mr. Davison Ficke (*Chats on Japanese Colour-prints*) found no difficulty in assimilating this phase of the artist's work. "His landscapes," wrote Mr. Ficke, "are his chief claim to fame. Among them are some of extraordinary quality." Coming from such a quarter, praise of a XIXth century artist (apart, of course, from Hokusai and Hiroshige) is praise indeed. The only dissentient voice is that of Strange, who considered that his views of Yedo were "without much delicacy," but I propose to disregard this minority of one, and proceed to examine Kuniyoshi's contribution to this branch of Ukiyoye.

His earliest landscapes seem to have taken the form of *surimono*, which are now very rare. A fine example is reproduced by Bidwell (*Artibus Asiae* IV, 194), and I am fortunate in being able to illustrate another from the collection of Mr. J. Knight (Fig. I). These *surimono* should date from about 1825-1832, and already reveal the originality of the artist in this field.

It was during the next decade, however, that the majority of Kuniyoshi's landscapes were published, and to this period also belong a number of prints which, though not designed as pure landscape, contain a strong landscape element. Such are *Sankai Meisan Dzukushi* ("Famous products of mountain and sea"), an upright series dating from about 1835 of which ten prints are known, illustrating the



Fig. II. Second print of the series "Fifty-three Stations on the Tōkaidō Road," showing the stations Hodogaya, Totsuka, Fujisawa and Hiratsuka. About 1834. Victoria and Albert Museum.

agricultural and marine products of various provinces. The series on the life of Nichiren (*Kōsō go-ichidai riaku no dzu*) is also strong in landscape.

But in pure landscape Kuniyoshi's earliest work was probably his first *Tōkaidō* series, complete in twelve sheets, oblong, each sheet showing between three and six stations of the road. The contrast to Hiroshige's treatment of the same theme is immediately striking. Kuniyoshi's view is far wider, and the prints of this series are really panoramic. But even so he never loses the human touch which is such a notable feature of this branch of his work—the round-faced country-woman carrying her baby—the consequential bumpkin urging his tired mount up an



Fig. I. "Landscape Surimono. About 1825. Collection of Mr. J. Knight."

incline—and the officious gentleman in the wide straw-hat pointing out the features of the landscape to a not very interested companion who stolidly smokes his pipe under a tree. Prints of this series lose more than most in reduced and uncoloured reproductions; their panoramic quality demands full size, and their colours contribute much to their spacious effect. I have therefore chosen for reproduction (Fig. II) one which is mostly a matter of blacks and greys, though there are gay flashes of colour among the travellers in the foreground. Bidwell suggests that this series may have been commissioned as a result of the success of Hiroshige's first *Tōkaidō* set, published early in 1834. This date would certainly be about right, and the theory is very reasonable, though it cannot be proved.

Within a year or so of this appeared two complementary series of views of Yedo. The first of these (*Tōto Meisho*), which includes some of Kuniyoshi's best-known and most striking landscapes, consists of ten sheets, oblong, and is easily distinguished by the circular panel on which the title is written. The "Seaweed-gatherers at Omori" (Fig. III), "which," as Binyon says, "both in feeling and composition is a masterpiece," and the "Anglers on the Rocks at Teppōsu" are the best known, but the standard of all is so high that it seems invidious to pick out one or two as outstanding. However, apart from the two just mentioned, it is impossible to pass over the amazing moonlit view of the New Yoshiwara—the enormous halo round the moon casting shadows from the two or three night-birds who are still abroad, one apparently with his voice raised in a ribald song, whilst a couple of dogs sleep unconcernedly by the side of the road.

Of the second set of Yedo views only five prints are known. The title is here on a long upright panel, and consists merely of the name of the place depicted, prefixed by *Tōto* ("Eastern Capital," i.e. Yedo). The most noteworthy of these is the "Shower on the river-bank at Mimmaya," and anybody who has experienced one of these sudden torrential downpours in



Fig. III. Series: *Tōto Meisho*. Seaweed gatherers at Ōmori. About 1835. Victoria and Albert Museum.

the tropics will be sharply reminded of it by this print; one can almost hear the hiss of the rain and catch the sharp smell of the parched earth as the water soaks into it.

The Tōkaidō series had been in almost pure Japanese style, and in some ways recalled Hiroshige's work; but in these Yedo views Kuniyoshi had begun to experiment with European ideas which come out most noticeably in his treatment of sky, trees, and perspective. "It says much for his talent," as Strange observes, "that the result is far less incongruous than were the attempts of most other Japanese artists who made the experiment." Kuniyoshi is recorded to have possessed a considerable collection of European pictures which were kept in a store-room whose key was entrusted to the promising young pupil Yoshitoshi. Bidwell goes so far as to say in his paragraph on the first Tōkaidō series (*Artibus Asiae* IV, 25): "There is frequently use of a large tree in the foreground suggestive of the plates of Turner. By 1834 Turner was 59 years of age. It would not be strange if Kuniyoshi had seen and possibly owned some engraving of Turner's work. It is reported that Kuniyoshi was not satisfied with Oriental pictorial art but was a collector of European pictures of several hundred in number. This urge for a new vision led him to study photography between 1843 and 1853." The reader may at his own discretion accept or reject

the Turner theory—it is at any rate given as a theory, far-fetched perhaps, but tenable. But the last astonishing sentence of this passage is a categorical statement. This picture of Kuniyoshi with a camera in his hand or dabbling in a developing-tank is something quite new, and it is much to be regretted that Mr. Bidwell does not give his authority for a statement of such a startling nature.

One detached oblong landscape print of the same period is worth mentioning. This is entitled "Mount Asama seen from Usuitoge Pass" (*Usuitoge yori Asama wo miru*), and depicts the great mountain divided by a wide irregular band of mist from a foreground of luxuriant trees; a party of travellers with a pack-horse are seen descending the pass, and two of them have halted on a rocky outcrop to admire the view. Two versions of this print exist, the main differences being that in what I take to be the original version the summit of the mountain is hidden in a curiously conventionalised cloud, and there are less trees and less mist on the right hand side of the print. Many Japanese prints exist in various "states," the most usual variation being the omission of one or more blocks from later printings, presumably on grounds of economy. But in this particular instance the blocks have been entirely recut with certain omissions and additions. Both versions may be compared in the British Museum collection.



Fig. V. View of the Tamura Ferry in Sagami Province. About 1840. Collection of Mr. J. Knight.



Fig. IV. No. 6 of the "Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety." Sōsan returning home to his aged mother. About 1840. Collection of Mr. J. Knight.

Kuniyoshi's westernising style is most noticeable in his well-known oblong series of the Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety (*Ni-jū-shi-kō Dōji Kagami*), which, though not primarily landscapes, contain so strong a landscape element as to justify their mention here (Fig. IV). This series belongs to about 1840, and appeared along with his next batch of landscapes proper. These comprise a series of Thirty-six Views of Fuji from Yedo (*Tōto Fuji-mi San-jū-rok'kei*) published by Murata-ya, of which he only seems to have completed five. In this series Kuniyoshi returns to a more purely Japanese treatment, though the title is written on an oval baroque cartouche of obviously Dutch origin, divided in two by what appears to be an upright dagger of European form. These prints are of a uniformly high standard, though they do not contain quite such outstanding designs as the earlier series. Other landscapes produced by Kuniyoshi about this time include a good view of the Tamura Ferry in Sagami province (Fig. V), and another of the famous Rōben Waterfall at Ōyama. This was a favourite resort of pilgrims, being sometimes called the Sekison ("stone image") Waterfall, from a statue of the goddess Benten, and it was their practice to bathe there, standing



Fig. VI. Kinriūzan and Bentenzan, Asakusa, in snow.
Seal—dated 1853. Victoria and Albert Museum.

under the broad jet of water that issues from the rock above the pool for as long as they could endure its icy temperature. Kuniyoshi depicted it at least four times, on two oblong single-sheet prints and two triptychs. Of the latter one is mentioned by Japanese authorities among Kuniyoshi's earliest works "about the end of the period Bunkwa" (i.e. about 1817-1818), and the other, a vastly inferior piece of work, dates from about 1850. These two triptychs, however, cannot be classed as landscapes, the artist being chiefly concerned with the dense masses of pilgrims struggling in the pool and on the bank and crowding under the waterfall.

Between 1840 and 1850, so far as we know, Kuniyoshi produced no landscape prints, but in 1850 or thereabouts he began another Tōkaidō series entitled "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō: a Record of Different Kinds of People" (*Tōkaidō Gojū-san Tsugi : Jimbutsu Shū*), of which, however, only eight prints were published (by Yebi-ya Rinnosuke). These are now of considerable rarity. As the title implies, the human element is strong, and the figures are on a larger scale than in his earlier series. These prints are pleasant and lively enough, but lack any conspicuous distinction as landscapes.

Lastly, in 1853, Kuniyoshi designed about five more views of places in or around Yedo, of which the best are "Asakusa in snow" (Fig. VI), and a good view of the Nishi Hongwanji temple (which was burnt down in 1872) among the cherry-blossoms. In landscape, however, as well as in his heroic compositions, the artist's powers seem to have declined somewhat from about 1850 onwards, and it must be admitted that these late works, charming as they are, lack the originality and inspiration of the first Tōkaidō and the earlier Yedo views.

Kuniyoshi's heroic and theatrical prints are, quite literally, innumerable; but his landscapes are estimated by Bidwell at no more than seventy-five. But even this number evidently includes *surimono* and other prints where the landscape is incidental, and I cannot myself find that his landscapes proper exceed fifty in number—less than one per cent of his published work. But their general standard is so high that some writers, as already noted, have bewailed the fact that their number is so small. Perhaps, however, this is no bad thing after all; if Kuniyoshi had attempted to approach Hiroshige's output in this field, there can be little doubt that his reputation would have suffered. But as it was, each artist kept himself mainly to his own chosen *métier*. When they did launch out into each other's preserves, Kuniyoshi was undoubtedly the more successful of the two.



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SHAFTS FROM APOLLO'S BOW

30. Splendide Mendax

OMEBODY once wrote the old tag on the frame of one of Turner's pictures in a moment of inspired art criticism, and most of us would agree that it is the business of art not merely "to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature" but—if the artist feels that way—to use a distorting mirror. Strangely, alongside this contemporary passion for untruth in one direction, in another modern opinion has an obsession with truth which is altogether new. The duality was paraded in a recent speech by the Director of the National Gallery when he was opening an exhibition of sculpture and drawings by Henry Moore at Manchester. He stated that "there was always distortion in art in the sense that art only began to be art when it wandered away from exact reproduction" (we quote *The Times* report so cannot swear that "wandered away," with its air of sweet insouciance, was really Mr. Hendy's phrase or whether it is no more than journalistic licence). Nor is this the place to enquire where, say, XVIIth century Dutch still life painting stands under this stricture or much else that finds an honoured place in the Gallery of which Mr. Hendy is Director. For the speaker went on to emphasise the converse side of this doctrine: that the artist must be absolutely honest about his material: Henry Moore wanted to get back to "the stoniness of stone."

All this was a defence of his hero from the attack by Sir Alfred Munnings, who apparently has no proper respect for the painting of paint and doesn't wander away anywhere. Mr. Hendy is also reported as saying that "there was a great deal of distortion in the mind of a sculptor who tried to make marble look like lace: that was a distortion of marble." He did not give any specific instance of this feat in marmoreal illusion, and I personally cannot recall one, though the Greeks had rather a way of making marble look like drapery, an error in which they were followed by people like Michelangelo. However, a great deal of water has flowed under the Ponte Vecchio since then, and it may be that sculpture gets better and better every day in every way, gradually discarding these errors of its infancy and adolescence and finally achieving in our day the absolute stoniness of stone which has entirely wandered away from exact reproduction.

In one department of applied art, however, one would incline to agree with Mr. Hendy's demand for truth to material, and stand entirely with him in his campaign against "reproducing in great detail something too good to be true." That is in the matter of British Railways' inspired decision to reproduce on board our long-distance express trains refreshment bars in facsimile of "ye Olde English taverne" with painted beams and bricks and imitation Elizabethan settles. Even Sir Alfred would probably agree that this is carrying the imitative arts too far. The announcement of this piece of showmanship evoked an immediate protest from a group of authorities in various branches whose business it is to uphold some sort of cultural standard in such matters, and then by a number of members of the House of Commons. Whereupon the Public Relations Officer of the Railway Executive replied that the scheme was "purely experimental," and that when the Executive "have before us the full measure of public reaction (including the aesthetic) we shall have useful guidance for the future."

We live, indeed, in a democratic age. The idea that the public will—in some way not yet disclosed—vote upon the kind of décor on these public vehicles opens up somewhat alarming vistas; but in an age when we have so little say in all the manifold good which is done to us by beneficent state services we will at least applaud the abstract good intention of consulting us. If full justice is to be done, however, we must have a wider choice than tavern and anti-tavern; and we suggest the romantic charm of a Venetian Gondola setting, an Alpine Gasthaus, a Wild-West Cabin, and such others as the Railway Executive can devise. Meantime, glass of beer (or is it mead?) in hand, we will keep our precarious foothold in ye Olde Taverne whose ancient beams and bricks hurtle through space at sixty miles an hour, served I hope by Mine Host in broad red waistcoat, shirt sleeves, green apron and smoking a good churchwarden clay. Whatever anachronism there is in all this, it may at least fit in with the genuine antiquity of our railway stations and termini.

Or perhaps in this matter it would be better for art to begin to be art by wandering away from exact reproduction, and, whatever we may think of loyalty to the stoniness of stone, to stand firmly for the traininess of trains.

A COLLECTOR'S HOME—PART I

BY LEONARD T. BRIDELL



ROUGHLY seven miles north of Evesham there is a group of five ancient villages called the Lenchies, all within a radius of a few miles. Perhaps the most interesting of them is Rous Lench, named after the Rous family. Driving in from Evesham, Rous Lench Court comes into view, just off the road, a fine example of a black and white half-timbered house,

set amidst a series of clipped yew hedges and walls, and rising beyond the house are terraces of gardens and lawns. The yew walks and hedges, pruned and shaped into geometrical battlemented design, with spires of yew at the intervals of each rising step, are centuries old; a part is said to have been planted in 1480. One yew-enclosed walk leads in steps to a yew thicket shaped



A COLLECTOR'S HOME



as a cottage and another to one in the form of the exterior of a church.

The garden has historical associations. A feature is a circular yew arbour 36 feet in diameter, formed of living yews, the pillars being their trunks. In the time of Charles I the Lord of the Manor was Sir John Rous, born probably 1573; he succeeded to the estate in 1611 and in 1612 was made Sheriff of the county. He was again Sheriff in 1638 at a time when Charles was levying ship money from the inland counties. In 1636 this tax was demanded from Worcestershire, and towards the end of 1637 Sir John Rous paid three thousand pounds towards the amount required, and in 1638 he was asked by the Mayor of Worcester to find the balance. Presumably he refused, for on April 4th, 1639, he and his son were arrested and sent to prison at Warwick from his house in Worcestershire. The tradition is that he was taken in the yew arbour, which is said originally to have been built around a marble summer house which has long since disappeared.

Higher up in the garden stood a tree called Baxter's tree. Richard Baxter, the Cromwellian Nonconformist divine, saw action as Army chaplain at the sieges of Bridgwater, Bristol, Exeter and Worcester; after Worcester, when he was about 30 years of age, he was in poor health and was quartered on Sir Thomas Rous, the son of Sir John. The Lady Rous treated him kindly and he later returned to them as a guest, to the great benefit of his health. Here he wrote the first part of one of his greatest works, "The Saints' Everlasting Rest," published in 1650, and this part is dedicated to Sir Thomas and Jane, Lady Rous: "Right Worshipful, This first part of this Treatise was written under your roof and therefore I present it to you, not as a gift but as your own . . ."

The earliest Lords of the Manor were the Bishops of Worcester from perhaps the XIth century, the period also of the foundation of the Norman church in the village. The Rous family lived here in 1397; in 1634 they entered their pedigree at the Herald's Visitations. Edward III was entertained at the Court and there is a strong tradition that Cromwell stayed here before the Battle of Worcester. The Rous family proper became extinct in 1729 and the estate passed to a connection by marriage, Thomas Phillips, who assumed the name of Rous and became High Sheriff of Worcester in 1733. He seems chiefly remembered for driving in a coach drawn by six black stallions. In later years it became empty and neglected and about 25 years ago this old house bade fair to come to an ignoble and sordid end; it was to be put up for auction for demolition, bringing dealers

from afar to carry away the pieces, some from London, Manchester, and Edinburgh, and others from New York and Chicago. The old panelling was torn down and marked off in lots. Mr. F. W. Burn, the present owner's father, preserved it from its imminent and complete dispersal, and on the morning of the sale bought the estate and later bought much of the panelling used in the restoration of the house.

The house is a small manor of about 14 rooms, the earliest part *circa* 1480. The hall is XVIIth century and the north end of the north wing has been rebuilt in modern times. There is a fine gatehouse of typical Tudor form. The third son of Sir John Rous, born 1616, married Mary, daughter of Thomas Coombe of Stratford-on-Avon, whose brother was a personal friend of William Shakespeare; the poet's son-in-law, Dr. Hall, attended (according to Dr. Hall's memoranda) Esther Lady Rous in 1619 and 1620. In March, 1620, she was 28 years of age when her last child was born, but she died in August of that year, having presented her husband with "prolem amplem et felicem." (There were ten children of the marriage.)

Of the original builders nothing is known, but the house probably began, as did many another



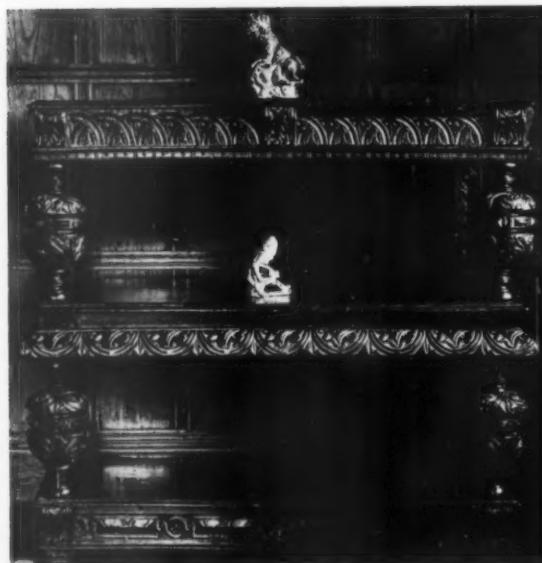
manor, as a small place. The "Biscopesleng" of Domesday is probably Rous Lench. The name "Randolph's Lench" came into use and continued until the end of Richard's reign, when the Rous family acquired the estate and their name, Rous Lench, gradually took its place. Professor Skeat, writing to Dr. Chaffy in 1900, says: "Lench is obviously the Anglo-Saxon for *hlinc*, 'a rising ground' or 'ridge'; there must have been an older A.S. form, *hlenc* which is actually preserved in 'lench'."

The collection which is housed in this home of a collector includes, besides those that are illustrated in this and the succeeding article, a daybed in walnut *circa* Charles II, a long-cased clock by Ed. East, *circa* 1665, in English marquetry, the hood having no pillars; a Tudor chair of yew, and a preacher's chair of 1680 with a reading desk at the top and a drawer for Bibles under the seat; there is a carved group of God the Father and the Son, *circa* 1500 or earlier; and several water clocks, one inscribed "A E Edmonds Burton 1644." Water clocks, or clepsydrae, were used in remote times in Egypt and Babylon; some from about 300 B.C. were elaborate and ingenious instruments; one was introduced into Greece by Plato, Pompey took one to Rome, and the King of Persia gave one to Charlemagne in A.D. 807. Those in this collection are similar to the clock figured in Britten (ed. VI, Fig. 16).

A P O L L O



Above is a dish by Ralph Toft, a majestic piece 17 ins. in diameter, of the XVIIth century, with its brilliant orange glaze and in mint condition, and another by Wm. Talor, c. 1740, of the same size and orange tint. Both are decorated in slip and of considerable vitality and charm. The jug between them is of similar design and period, 1704, and bears double sets of the initials H.S.; the jug on the left is by Ralph Shaw, 1775, in brown glaze with a band of orange glaze round the waist.



On the left is a small Elizabethan buffet in oak with a lift-up top 48 ins. wide and 44 ins. high. The dog of Fo 9 ins. high on the top is an unusually large Whieldon specimen with an aubergine glaze and the ball yellow brocaded. This is an instance of a piece dear to collector narrative, in this case the specimen escaped notice at a country sale and changed hands for a nominal figure, later passing through several hands until it came to rest in its present home.

The illustration below is of a long-case twenty-eight-day clock in burr walnut by Th. Tompion which has the feature of a bolt and shutter to maintain power whilst winding to ensure perfect timekeeping.



Here is an example of the much-coveted "Spinario," 6½ ins. high, by John Astbury. It depicts a man or boy picking a thorn out of his foot. The modelling is powerful though primitive; his head is huge and grotesque, yet there he is, alive and real; he is covered with a creamy coloured glaze and he sits on an agate base. The darker markings are in orange. It is interesting to speculate why this piece should have an instant and universal appeal; perhaps because, in addition to his ceramic qualities, he is doing something particularly human. The Schreiber collection has a very similar specimen of this rare figure by Astbury. It is said to have been originally inspired by the beautiful statuette of Spinario in the Capitoline Museum in Rome. Collectors feel that there is an element of caricature about the huge head and curious cap; that may be true of some versions, but in any case his attractiveness is undiminished.

A COLLECTOR'S HOME

In this collection there is an interesting Jacobean bureau in oak with turned legs and stretchers, which is only 22 ins. wide, and also eight Cromwellian Yorkshire chairs with their arched backs.



The illustration above is of an ancient credence table dated 1520 in oak, mellow warm grey in colour and with splayed legs; its doors swing easily on an ancient hinge. These tables have an ancient lineage, going back into the mists of time, and this one may be earlier than the date on its side, 1520. Its acquisition provides another collector's story. It was found in a Torquay ladies' hat shop supporting hats in the window, but fortunately it was spotted by a discerning eye and came to a more congenial home. These credence tables (according to the authorities) were used as small side tables placed near the high tables in noble or royal houses for the tasting of food or drink to guard against poisoning. This responsible office was carried out by the Praegustator or Credentiarius. The name survived long after the "tasting" had been discontinued. In the Roman Catholic Church the credence table is a small side table standing near the altar and is of stone or wood and holds the cruets and the wine and other things used in the Mass. The term "cruet" may sound strange in connection with the Mass, but it is the one which is practically always used by the Roman Church. Its history is interesting, for its varying forms have derived from common ancestors found in ancient Icelandic, Germanic and Gallo-Roman, respectively, "krukka," to be seen in O.E. "crock"; "cruca," Germanic for "pot." From this the Gallo-Roman "cruie," whence the diminutive "cruet." Mod. French, "cruche," via other Northern French dialects. Ancient stone credences exist but are rare, and wooden ones of 1520 or earlier are extremely rare. On this table is a Gothic group in wood, perhaps of the "Presentation of Christ in the Temple."

(To be continued)



A prize of the collection is the bracket clock in ebonised case by Thomas Tompion, *circa* 1695; the dial is 7½ ins. in diameter and is gilt and silvered, having also an alarm dial. The spandrels are of ormolu finely chased, and there is a repeater cord on both sides; a very rare feature is the original key of this clock, one end for winding the striking, the other end for winding the alarm mechanism.



Above is an unusual Charles II birdcage in oak, oblong in plan with one semi-circular end. The carved cresting bears a crown and the whole is exceedingly well preserved.

The illustration below is of an especially nice pair of Stuart silk and tinsel pictures in their original oyster frames, and this is, of course, somewhat of a rarity. The pictures themselves are small, 5 ins. by 6 ins., and overall they measure 10 ins. by 9 ins.



HARD-PASTE NEW HALL PORCELAIN—PART II

BY T. A. SPRAGUE

IN the previous article on this subject some hints were given as to how to distinguish hard-paste New Hall porcelain, on the one hand from pieces exported from China for the European market, and on the other hand from Champion's Bristol. An account of the various shapes met with, and of some well-authenticated patterns, now follows, under the headings of teapots, stands, cream-jugs, and decoration.

I. TEAPOTS. As stated by Mr. Honey,¹ "a straight-sided silver-shape teapot was very popular at New Hall and almost peculiar to the factory." In the writer's collection, however, there are teapots of similar shape belonging to at least two other factories. One of these teapots may be confidently assigned to Worcester, while a second cannot be identified until the extensive collections of English porcelain in the Victoria and Albert Museum are again available for examination.

The New Hall version of this silver-shape has an eight-sided spout with a strong ogee curve on its lower side and a relatively gentle one on its upper side; the latter curve is mainly convex, but reverses slightly in direction just before joining the body of the teapot. The two lowermost faces of the spout are the widest,

and the uppermost ones are very narrow and nearly in the same plane. The attachment of the upper part of the spout usually ranges from 2.5 cm. to 3.5 cm. below the ledge round the top of the teapot. The handle forms a narrowly ear-shaped curve without any cusps, whether external or internal, with a U-shaped or bluntly V-shaped attachment at its base. The lid is more or less convex, and fits inside the projecting rim on top of the pot; its knob is flask-shaped with a short neck and a central steam-hole. As seen from the top these teapots are roughly diamond-shape with a projecting band on the middle of each of the four faces. Typical teapots of these shapes are shown in Figs. I—III (New Hall patterns, Nos. 171, 173 and 195 respectively).

A second type of New Hall teapot (Fig. IV, No. 195) is roughly ellipsoid in shape with a distinct waist, the profile of the pot consequently forming a double ogee curve. The spout is not angled, but elliptic in transverse section; it has a well-marked ogee curve on its upper side. The handle is similar to that of the silver-shape teapots. The lid is very different, projecting over the opening of the pot; it is 2—2.5 cm. high and ogee-curved in profile, flattened at the top and surmounted by

Fig. I.
Pattern No. 171



Fig. II.
Pattern No. 173



Fig. III.
Pattern No. 195



HARD-PASTE NEW HALL PORCELAIN

Fig. IV.
Pattern No. 195



Fig. V. Pattern No. 421.

a solid elliptic-oblong knob with a central boss; the steam-hole is at one end of the flat top of the lid.

A third shape (Figs. V, VI, Nos. 421, 425) is elliptic and vertical-sided. The spout is distinctly octagonal, and exhibits a well-marked ogee curve on the upper side. The handle is ear-shaped. The convex lid fits almost flush inside the very short rim, and is surmounted by an elliptic-oblong knob with a boss in the centre. The steam-hole is in front, half-way between the centre and rim of the lid. A peculiar but not invariable feature of this type of pot is the presence of a horizontal diaphragm extending at the front for 1.5—2 cm. over the opening; in order to fit within the reduced opening, the forward part of the flange inside the lid is cut away. An elliptic vertical-sided teapot of pattern No. 621 in the writer's collection has no diaphragm, and no flange underneath the lid to hold it steady: this seems to be unusual.

A fourth type (Fig. VII right, No. 593) may be termed "boat-shaped." The body of the pot is depressed-ellipsoid. The spout has a roughly triangular base and apex; its lower face is strongly convex and is separated from the gently curved upper face by a marked angle on each side. The rim on top of the pot slants outwards as well as upwards, and rises in front to form a rounded "prow." The handle is attached to the top of the rim, and is

extended beyond its lower area of attachment into a free, rounded, downwardly and outwardly directed cusp. The lid as a whole is strongly convex, but exhibits a very gentle ogee curve in profile. The knob is elliptic-oblong with a central boss, and the steam-hole is half way between the centre and rim of the lid.

In all these types of teapot the pattern number is marked on the base in bold figures, either with or without a preceding N, No or N., the capital N being usually in script, less frequently a block letter. The numbering of pieces of New Hall is generally done in orange, brown, black, or pink enamels, and only occasionally in green.

2. TEAPOT - STANDS. These seem to be relatively scarce, perhaps having been sold as pin-trays, and



Fig. VI. Pattern No. 425.

the writer has seen only two elliptic stands, all the others corresponding to the "silver-shaped" teapots. Though it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the New Hall teapots of this shape from those made by other factories, it is quite easy to recognize the New Hall stands, in which the general outline is distinctly diamond-shaped with a well-marked projecting arc on each of the four sides, whereas those of other factories are more elliptic (Fig. VIII). Furthermore the New Hall stand here illustrated (No. 241) has the uniform glaze characteristic of that factory, whereas the other stand of the same pattern, which is unnumbered,

has an uneven rippled glaze giving off multiple reflections, and is roughly glazed on the base—an unusual feature in teapot stands: it has not yet been identified. It may be mentioned that not all New Hall stands are numbered, and that all those hitherto seen by the writer are unglazed beneath.

3. CREAM-JUGS. Each of the four types of teapot illustrated in Figs. I—VII has a cream-jug of corresponding shape, namely, silver-shaped, ellipsoid and waisted, elliptic and vertical-sided, or boat-shaped, as the case may be. Two additional shapes of cream-jug are known, namely a compressed obconical one shown in Figs. I—IV which apparently was used with teapots of the first two types, and a helmet cream-jug like those previously made at Bristol under Champion. It is difficult, however, to be certain that such helmet types are New Hall rather than Bristol or some third factory, unless they bear a number corresponding to a known New Hall pattern. All hard-paste New Hall cream-jugs seen by the writer have a plain ear-shaped handle, which in the case of the boat-shaped types is produced at the base into a free descending cusp just as in the corresponding teapots.

4. DECORATION. Most of the New Hall patterns have a floral motif (Figs. I—IV, VII, VIII), designs of Chinese figures and scenery (Figs. V, VI) being relatively scarce. In the floral patterns the main feature is a bunch or bouquet of flowers, frequently composed of a highly conventional red rose and a puce one, back to back, with subsidiary leafy sprays of daisies, chrysanthemums or pimpernels, or indeed of wholly imaginary flowers of various colours. For descriptive purposes the collector may find it convenient to designate certain common forms by the names of actual flowers, but it would be idle to expect any close approximation to nature in the designs used by the New Hall enamellers. A basket of flowers (Fig. I) is the principal feature in several patterns. There was a considerable repertory of borders, a common ground plan consisting of a single or double straight line intersecting a wavy one. The wavy line is sometimes represented by a pink or mauve ribbon with small floral sprigs in the bays, sometimes by a floral wreath, sometimes by a line of orange or black dots. Other borders are composed of two intersecting wavy lines, one consisting of a leafy wreath of flowers, and the other of a series of dots (Figs. VII left, VIII). Diaper borders, usually in red, were not uncommon, either continuous as in Fig. II or interrupted at intervals by small panels containing

floral sprigs. Other borders consisted of zigzags or circles of arrowheads or of small arcs. Most of the patterns are in polychrome, but monochrome black ones are not uncommon. These show the pattern much more distinctly and appear to have won favour on that account: we may dismiss as old wives' tales the suggestion that they were made for sober-minded Quakers or as sets for use during mourning, whether national or personal! Dichrome decoration is rare, but sometimes very effective. About one thousand different patterns appear to have been made at New Hall during the hard-paste period, but some of these were practically the same except for their colour, namely, polychrome, black or orange respectively, whilst others consisted of the same general decoration with a different border. Many additional patterns were produced by such recombinations of borders and central elements, with the result that there is a great similarity amongst them, and one gets to recognize a general New Hall style of decoration. But unfortunately for the collector some of the more popular patterns were used elsewhere, so that the beginner who starts by collecting pieces of "New Hall type" before he has gained experience in the nuances of glaze and paste may end by finding a number of other factories represented in his collection. The subsequent identification of these alien pieces is, however, an education in itself, often leading to the discovery of slight differences in decoration peculiar to particular factories. The decoration shown in Figs. III, IV is, however, singularly uniform, and it does not seem possible to determine the factory from any details in the painting, though the shapes of the more important pieces provide useful clues. The New Hall pattern number is 195, but there are pieces in the writer's collection (all apparently soft-paste) bearing the numbers 1, 74, 124 and 145 respectively, thus indicating that this pattern, adapted from a Chinese prototype, was used by at least five factories including New Hall! This, however, appears to be an extreme case.

The difference between hard-paste and soft-paste is not easy to define, and can only be learned, if at all, by experience, as some soft-paste is almost equally resistant to the file. But the greater brilliance of the glaze and enamels are valuable criteria of soft-paste, and the depth to which the enamels sink leads to their more effective preservation, with the result that a piece of soft-paste may be in mint condition, whereas the enamels in a piece of hard-paste of about the same age may be much worn. The identification of the various soft-paste factories that employed New Hall patterns is one of the tasks that awaits the future monographer.

¹ Honey, W. B., *Old English Porcelain*, ed. 2 (1931), p. 241.

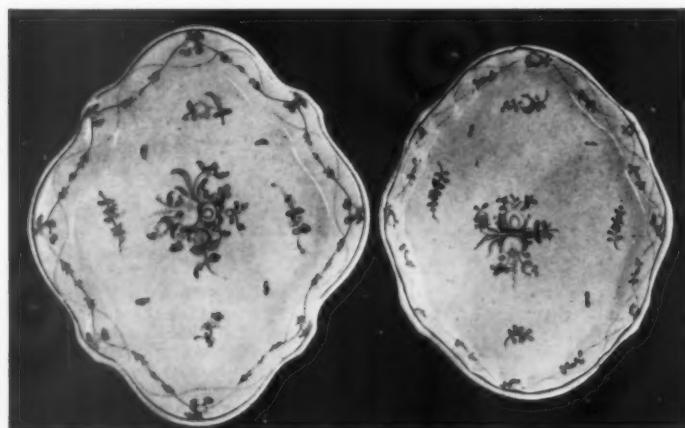


Fig. VIII. (Left) New Hall teapot-stand No. 241. (Right) Soft-paste stand of unidentified factory.

CORRECTION OF ADDRESS

The business premises of Dorothy R. L. Howell are at 112 Alcester Road, Moseley, Birmingham 13, and not 12 Alcester Road shown in the advertisement in the APOLLO ANNUAL, 1949.

AN EXHIBITION OF CHAIRS (Late XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries)

BY JOHN ELTON

CHAIRS, which can be isolated from other forms of furniture for independent consideration, respond readily to the changes of fashion and can be grouped to show their evolution, as in the exhibition at Messrs. M. Harris at New Oxford Street. In the form of the back, and its inclination, and in the provision of fixed upholstery, the chair keeps time with the progress of comfort. There is (in the words of the catalogue of the Lady Lever Art Gallery), "a remarkable satisfaction experienced by seeing the various sets of chairs placed together."

Chairs of the early age of oak are not common, but the extremely rare type of cross-framed upholstered chair, which was revered in the reign of James I, is represented by a loan from Knole. The centre surface of these chairs at Knole is covered with velvet, or satin with applied embroidery fixed by nails, and a loose cushion stuffed with down adds to the chair's comfort. The ages of walnut and mahogany yield a very varied and interesting assortment of types. The walnut armchair (Fig. I), with spirally turned back uprights, arm supports and stretchers, is typically English in its refinement on the contemporary Continental chair. In the slightly concave back a caned panel is surrounded by a pierced and carved frame, and the cresting and front stretcher are carved with terminal figures supporting a basket, and finishing in acanthus scrolls. Specimens of two sets of chairs have been lent to the exhibition from Mereworth, one a walnut single chair dating from the early XVIIth century, having the back covered with Soho tapestry with a design of a vase of flowers, and grouped flowers on the seat. A later chair from this collection is an unusual and fine example of Early Georgian design, formerly at Wroxton Abbey. The scroll-shaped legs are enriched with carved scaling and acanthus leaves, the broad back is slightly concave, and the presence of a stretcher is an unusual feature (see March issue, p. 69, Fig. VII). The armchair made for the Fruiterers' Company belongs to the imposing (and sometimes overwhelming) series of Masters' chairs, such as is still possessed by almost every City company. Like most other Masters' chairs of the XVIIth century, the tall back and cresting was designed to add dignity to its occupant. In the centre, the splat is carved with figures of Adam and Eve under the Tree of Knowledge, and on the cresting is a cartouche carved with a wagon laden with panniers of fruit. The arms are carved with a small lion couchant, and the upper part of the seat rail with grotesque human masks. Among chairs on which a lattice filling is used, as a motif in the Chinese taste, is a tall-backed winged armchair in which the back, arms and ears are filled with openwork designs. The chair was made for a "sleeping chair" for the back is adjustable by means of a ratchet at the sides of the arms.

From the reign of George III onwards there are a number of interesting specimens in mahogany and satinwood, dating from the period when English design was highly regarded and influential in many European countries. The chair (Fig. III) is part of a large set of furniture made by Richard and Robert Gillow for John Christian, of Workington Hall, in Cumberland. The chair has a moulded shield-shaped back carved with the Prince of Wales' plume of feathers and with slender drapery festoons. Another use of this motif is shown in a satinwood chair, in which the splat is formed of three large ostrich plumes tied by a ribbon knot, an ornament dating from about 1780, when George, Prince of Wales, was the arbiter of fashionable taste.



Fig. I. Walnut armchair.
Period of Charles II.

BOOKS RECEIVED

AMERICAN SILVER. JOHN MARSHALL PHILLIPS. Max Parish. 15s. net.

THE LAND OF ITALY. JASPER MORE. Batsford. 18s. net.

LASCAUX. ALAN HOUGHTON BRODERICK. Lindsay Drummond. 15s.

THE LANGUAGE OF PAINTING. CHARLES JOHNSON. Cambridge University Press. 25s. net.

CHINESE CERAMIC GLAZES. A. L. HETHERINGTON. Second revised edition. Cambridge University Press. 21s. net.



Fig. II. Mahogany chair from the Fruiterers' Company, circa 1740.
Lent by the Lady Lever Art Gallery.



Fig. III. Mahogany single chair, part of a set made by Gillow, circa 1790.

ANTIQUE FURNITURE—THE AGE OF DRY CONSTRUCTION IN ENGLAND

BY EDWARD H. PINTO

A NUMBER of writers on old furniture have divided up the "periods" of furniture under the names of the woods most popularly used between certain dates. This gives broad headings such as "Oak Period," "Walnut Period," "Mahogany Period," etc. It can, however, be misleading because, quite apart from the overlaps between the periods, other woods were used for furniture at the same times and some of them probably in relatively large quantities, but because these other woods were particularly prone to beetle infestation and various forms of rot, only little made from them has survived. To name merely one useful but non-durable native wood, beech is easily worked, abundantly available until recently, and has been used for furniture since early times, yet little furniture made from it has survived from earlier than the XVIIth century. It may, therefore, be informative to discuss the common forms of furniture construction at different periods.

Quite apart from changes in popularity of woods due to Continental fashions and opening up of fresh sources of supply and in designs and construction due to foreign influences and improved standards of living, there is a fundamental difference between the small amount of English furniture which has survived of date earlier than the XVIIth century and the furniture which has come down to us from the XVIIIth and XIXth centuries. What is that difference? It is that the earlier furniture of the oak period was designed to be made and was made without the constructional use of glue.

This is not to suggest that glue was unknown until the XVIIth century, or even that it was never used before in furniture. Stone carvings left by the early Egyptians show that animal hot glues were used by them with a similar technique to that employed to-day; some say that they also used casein cements. We have records, too, that Roman furniture was veneered with rare and costly woods. Pliny tells us that Cicero gave no less than one million sesterces for a veneered table of citrus wood; but after the fall of Rome many processes and arts were lost for anything up to a thousand years and it may well be that glued construction was among them.

Let us now examine some old chests, for the chest is the basic piece of furniture which has appeared in every civilisation of which we have records and many other pieces of furniture have been evolved from it. Probably the earliest form of wooden chest in England, and in many other parts of the world, was that now known as the dug-out, but more appropriately called by its original name of a trunk, for that is exactly what it was—a hollowed tree trunk. The body of the trunk was not constructed, it was excavated. The excavated hollow was covered either by an inserted hinged lid or by a hinged lid formed from the slab board of the log, which was often left with the coved top surface



Fig. I. Sketch of medieval chest, showing the lid of "trunk" outline, but the chest of board construction.

following the original contour of the log. Sometimes the sides of the chest were also left in the tree form, only the base being squared to prevent rolling.

Chests of plank construction dating from the XIIIth and XIVth centuries are at times found with coved lids made from a portion of the tree trunk. Such lids are sometimes the solid slab sawn from the log; at other times, as in Fig. I, they are roughly curved on the underside to fit over the shaped chest ends. In the last stage of evolution, some of these chests, such as the specimen in the church at High Laver, Essex, had the coved lids built up of boards crossed by iron straps, giving them in general outline a strong resemblance to the travelling receptacles, with tops coved for weathering, which we now know as trunks. Whilst some authorities do not agree with me, I think it logical to suppose that the dug-out trunk was the ancestor of the board constructed chest in every civilisation, for it is the simplest kind of receptacle to form. There are natives in different parts of the world to this day who burn and chip out dug-out canoes and chests, but who are incapable of using plank construction and I think it likely that after the departure of the Romans, the natives of these islands lapsed into a similar state for some considerable time and reverted to making dug-out trunks again, as they had done in earlier times. For several, possibly many hundreds of years, dug-out trunks and board constructed chests were coeval and used for similar purposes in this island and the reason why the "trunks" were still being formed in the XIth and XIIth centuries, when board constructed chests were common, was probably because the former still admirably served their purpose of heavy and strong receptacles for church valuables and they were the simplest kind of "safe" to make.

The purpose of the medieval "trunks" is clearly shown by an order given by Henry II in 1166 that trunks should be placed in all parish churches to receive the offerings of the faithful for the relief of the Holy Land. The order stated that each trunk was to be secured by three keys, one to be held by the priest and the other two by reliable parishioners. A number of dug-out chests with three locks each are still to be found in parish churches.

The majority of medieval "trunks" and board constructed chests which have survived are in churches and probably owe their survival to that fact. Those still surviving in Essex in 1913 were admirably catalogued and sketched by Lewer and Wall under the title of *Church Chests in Essex*, in which volume will be found a very complete survey of the evolution of chests. It is impossible in most instances to draw any distinction between ecclesiastic and secular chests. Records exist of domestic chests being willed to churches and some



Fig. II. Chest of nailed board construction, made from six unjoined boards. By courtesy of Messrs. Ellard, of Ripley.

ANTIQUÉ FURNITURE

church chests, particularly at the Reformation, were pillaged from churches and put to secular use.

The simplest form of board chest was that constructed from six boards, nailed or pegged together. This crude form of box carpentry continued in use for furniture right up to the end of the XVth century, although framed chests were made in the XIIIth century, as Fig. IV shows. Fig. II illustrates an example in which, to avoid the necessity for jointing, all boards have been selected of the width required. When wide timber was available, this wasteful and unsound procedure was adopted on early chests, but even when boards of sufficient width were not procurable, the joints were not glued, but were secured externally by cross straps of iron, supplemented externally sometimes by nailed wooden cross battens. The reason for describing this construction as unsound is because to obtain such wide boards necessitated cutting them right through the heart of the tree. This invariably leads to warping and uneven shrinkage. The chest illustrated is not only badly warped, but the top now measures 17 in. in width from back to front on the left and only 15½ in. on the right, whilst the front board at the left end is 16½ in. wide and at the right end only 15½ in. wide. The thickness of the boards varies from 1½ in. to 1¾ in., probably more evidence of inaccurate sawing than of change of dimension in seasoning. The angles of this simple piece have been ornamented by gouge cuts and the faces with scratched lines, produced by a scratch tool and circles made by a spurred bit.

An unusually elaborate chest of the late XVth century, which still employs the six board construction, is that known as the "Fares" chest, Fig. III. The back of this chest is decorated more elaborately than the front and has the name N. FARES carved in Lombardic capitals on a central band surrounded by a border of Gothic vine and grape ornament.

Although this chest, with its front board rebated into the ends, is much finer than that shown in Fig. II, it shows clearly another weakness of the nailed board construction; that is the nailing of the width of the front and back boards against the long edges of the end boards. Because timber shrinks perceptibly in width, but hardly at all in length, this has often resulted in the splitting of the backs and fronts of these old chests. Curiously enough, where splitting has not taken place, it is usually because one fault in construction has cancelled out another. Nearly all these ancient chests are of oak and they are nailed with iron nails. The tannic acid in the oak eats the iron nails and so releases the face board, allowing it to shrink. Quite often when repairing ancient oak furniture, it will be found, for this reason, that the nail hole in the face board is considerably out of line with the continuation of the hole in the edge of the board to which it has been fixed.

The XIIIth century chest shown in Fig. IV, decorated with chip carved roundels, is interesting because it embodies two principles of construction which seem to have been employed

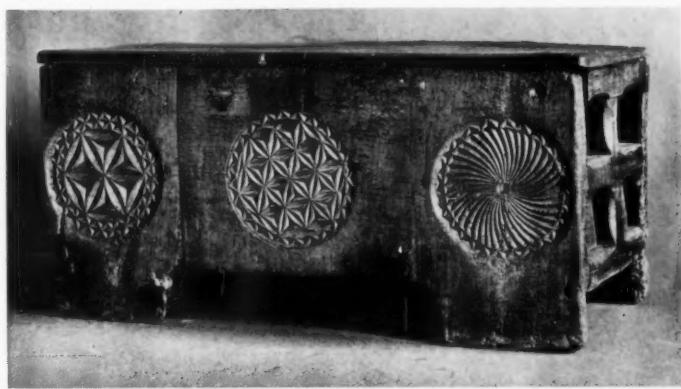


Fig. IV. XIIIth century chest of framed dry construction.
By courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

particularly at that period. One is the broad stiles of the simply framed front and the other is the wooden pin or pivot hinge of the lid. As in the other specimens already described, care has been taken to avoid the necessity of jointing any boards, the top, the front and back panels and each of the stiles having been cut from a single width.

This type of construction, with the use of the wood pin hinge, the wood pins for securing the tongues of the front and back panels to the stiles and the end-facing-frames constructed of chamfered rails halved together, marks the appearance of the real joiner on the scene, as opposed to the carpenter who, in partnership with the blacksmith, made the nailed chest.

The hutch or dole cupboard, with its Gothic pierced openings for ventilating the contents, was the other principal storage receptacle of the Middle Ages. Like the chest, it was crudely made, the chief care being in the selection of widths of boards to avoid jointing. The XVIth century cupboard in Fig. V has the front made from three plain oak boards, each 1½ in. thick and cut straight through the log. The nailed-on back boards are ½ in. thick. The board forming the door is battened on the inside. The broad pilasters are pegged to the carcass ends which each consist of a single board 14½ in. wide, bringing the overall depth from back to front up to 16½ in. The apron piece and right hand end of the moulding above it, as well as part of the cornice, are replacements.

Tops of the few early trestle tables and forms which have survived are almost invariably cut from single width planks. The latter, being comparatively narrow, would not have entailed any difficulty in selection, but it must at times have been a matter of some concern to obtain a single prime oak plank large enough for a table and does suggest the taking of considerable trouble to avoid the making of a joint.

Now why was glue not used constructionally in medieval furniture? Casein cements were known and animal glues must have been also, as they are normal by-products of the leather-worker's craft. There are several possible reasons: (1) The population was small, the area of forest land large, making selection of wide timbers fairly easy and wasted wood possibly of less avail than the increased labour entailed in jointing. (2) Glue making may have been very crude and the glue which must have been used for fixing leather to the outside and textile to the inside of coffers may have been of very low grade and not nearly strong enough for making reliable stressed (that is, constructional) joints in woodwork. (3) There may have been a limitation in the selection of tools available and the skill to use those that existed may not have been enough to permit the making of perfectly straight joints, with close contact all the way, an essential prerequisite for strong glue



Fig. III. The "Fares" chest. By courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum.



Fig. V.
A simple form
of nailed and
pegged cupboard.

By courtesy of
Messrs. Ellard, of
Ripley.

joints. (4) Thomas Hibben in *The Carpenter's Tool Chest* (J. B. Lippincott Company, 1933) makes the statement: "One curious prohibition of the Middle Ages was against the use of glue. The kind of glue made from cheese was well known then but the use of any kind of glue was strictly forbidden. It was required instead that every door or window be fastened together with wooden pegs or iron bolts and if an inspector from the guild found any glued work, he would destroy it on the spot." I do not know the source of this statement, but feel that the emphasis should be on "door" and "window." The same specification barring the use of glue for external joinery exposed to mould conducive conditions remained normal good practice until 1939, because alternate wetting and drying or continuous damp rapidly weakens animal glue joints and makes them unable to stand the movement stresses set up, whilst these same conditions soon create bacteriological infection, which totally destroys the adhesive. Whilst casein is somewhat more resistant to damp, it is still not suitable for external woodwork; only since the last war has the commercial development of synthetic resin adhesives made exterior glued woodwork a sound and practical proposition.

My opinion is that (1) and (2) had something to do with dry construction but that (3) was the governing factor. The surviving furniture itself does not suggest a high level of skill. Unsettled conditions were not conducive to good finish. Nailed construction, especially when reinforced with iron straps, met the chief need of security. Woodworkers of the Middle Ages used several types of saw, as well as axes, adzes, chisels, gouges, gimlets, augers, braces and bits, pincers and various marking gauges, most of them closely resembling tools in use to-day. Not until late in the medieval period, however, does the smoothing plane, used by the Romans, seem to have reappeared. A remarkably modern looking Roman plane, dating from the IVth century A.D., or earlier, was dug up at Silchester and is now in Reading Museum, but judging by the axe and adze finished faces of English medieval woodwork, the plane was not generally used as a flat facing tool, although crude moulding planes appear to have been used in the XIVth century. The earliest authentic post-medieval record of the smoothing plane in Western Europe that I know, is the illustration of one in Dürer's *Melancholia* (1514). An actual plane in the Rijks Museum, Amsterdam, was used in the Nova Zembla expedition of 1596.

If the plane was not generally used until near the end of the Middle Ages, and all available evidence suggests that it was not, then we have a convincing reason why boards were not glue jointed. Until that high-speed precision saw, the straight line edger, was invented recently, it was not possible to shoot a straight joint suitable for gluing, without possessing a long plane and some skill in its use. As we shall see in my next article, general use of the plane for facing furniture did not immediately result in use of glued construction, but that can be explained by the factors listed under headings (1) and (2), coupled with conservatism.

COLLECTORS' PROBLEMS

Enquiries must contain the fullest information and be accompanied, when possible, by a drawing or photograph.

SILVER SHIELD

E.B. (Ryde). It is clear from the context referred to in *The Gentle Art of Faking* that the three shields made by the Spanish faker were of iron repoussé and damascened, not of silver. Indeed a silver shield would hardly have been produced with intention to deceive, for the good reason that shields were not made of this material in the XVth century, with perhaps a very few exceptions, and a faker who made one in so unlikely a material would be incurring suspicion unnecessarily. Unfortunately Nobili does not illustrate the shield in question so no final answer on this point is possible.

Though silver shields were unusual, in fact almost unknown, in the XVth century, they were more frequently made in the XIXth century by craftsmen whose intention was to show that modern workers could produce works of art in the same style, and—so they thought—with the same spirit as the masters of the Renaissance. Prominent amongst these artist-craftsmen was a certain French metal-worker, Léonard Morel-Ladenil, 1820-1888, most of whose productions were in the form of silver shields, dishes and vessels, decorated in an over-rich Renaissance manner. His best known work was the "so-called" Milton shield, commissioned by the firm of Elkington for the Paris Exhibition of 1867 and subsequently purchased by the British Government for 75,000 francs. He produced other shields, most of which were reproduced in quantity by the galvano-plastic process. His so-called "Bunyan" shield has as its central panel a scene which might be misinterpreted as a struggle between Jupiter and the Titans.

L'Œuvre de Morel-Ladenil, Paris, 1904, by Léon Morel, contains a list of his works with numerous illustrations and should be consulted with a view to comparing the style of the silver shield with that of this craftsman. Without the assistance which a photograph would give, it is not possible to say much about the date of the shield, but it is probably a galvano-plastic reproduction of a XIXth century original.

HERALDRY : SURTEES ARMS

K.G. (Dorchester). The silver cake-basket by Edward Aldridge, and dated 1768, has on it the coat of arms, crest and motto of the Surtees family. The arms shown in the rubbing are blazoned:—Ermine, on a canton gules, an orle or. Crest: Out of a ducal coronet, a plume of feathers. The motto: Malo mori quam for dari (I would rather die than be dishonoured).

Guided by the date marked on the silver, a likely original owner of it was Aubone Surtees, Esq., born about 1711, whose name appears in 1745 amongst the first in a loyal declaration of the citizens of Newcastle, volunteering to take up arms should it be attacked by the rebels. He became alderman of Newcastle where, it is said, he was the object of the unbounded affection of the populace. The townspeople there frequently left requests in their wills that he would attend their funeral. After the death of his elder brother in 1751, he succeeded him as receiver-general for the counties of Northumberland and Durham. He married Elizabeth, daughter of John Stephenson, Esq., of Newcastle, and aunt to the second Countess of Mexborough, and died in his 90th year, 30th September, 1800.

ARMS ON STAINED GLASS AT CHARMANDEAN

H.C.P.S. (Worthing). The motto, alone, seemingly easy, is a difficult one to trace. It has a religious strain about it; "humilitate" is not usually found in secular coats; all likely places have been searched without success.

The coat itself is peculiar; the first and fourth quarters cannot be traced, and the three cups shown in your coloured drawing have, apparently, no bases. They are not unlike inverted hand-bells, but even so, no coat can be traced bearing them.

Another puzzle is the charge in the other quarters, described as a mullet or star. In heraldry mullets and stars have usually a fixed number of points—either 5 or 6. But that drawn looks like a "sun-in-splendour."

You may be able to obtain details from the records at Broadwater Church where the stained glass came from. The arms are certainly not those of Lord de la Warre—or the Alford coat.

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ENGLISH PEWTER PORRingers—PART I

Their evolution over three hundred years

BY RONALD F. MICHAELIS

This series of articles is of major interest to all students and collectors of pewter in that it attempts, for the first time, to classify all known types of English pewter porringers in a provisional chronological sequence. Mr. Michaelis is fortunate in having had access to many little-known collections of early London relics, and the fruits of his study of the specimens thus discovered are in four parts. Pewter collectors who may not buy "Apollo" regularly should place definite orders with newsagents, or the Publisher, for the copies concerned, to ensure continuity of delivery.

THE notes from which this article has grown were compiled, originally, purely for the writer's personal information, but over a number of years so much useful knowledge accumulated that it was felt to be to the benefit of all serious collectors and students of pewter that the fruits of study be preserved in print. The context itself will necessarily appeal mostly to those with a sympathetic interest in the study or collection of English pewter, but, nevertheless, it is hoped that others, more concerned with the purely historical, may find something of practical value herein, and that the title appearing at the head of this page will not convey the impression that the text holds nothing of interest for them.

In studying certain main features common to many types of porringers it occurred to the writer that some degree of accuracy could be attained in dating specimens, firstly, by body shapes, and, secondly, by the designs of the ears, or handles.

In compiling such a survey, the first, and major, difficulties were to decide (1) where to begin, and (2) what to include within the term *porringer*.

So far as date is concerned, the early XVIth century has here been selected as a starting point, although porringers of sorts were possibly, and even probably, used by the Romans in Britain and also by the later generations of inhabitants of these isles in medieval times; such pieces would, however, be of extreme rarity and hardly come within the scope of the present study.

To a pewter collector the term "porringer" generally conjures up the image of a vessel of somewhat flattish, circular formation, with deeply "booged" sides to the bowl, usually with one flat, fretted ear, set horizontally to the body, and a central "boss" in the base of the bowl.

This type is the commonest of all pewter porringers; it is also a style frequently met with in silver. In the latter metal, however, it is strange to note that it is seldom given the title of *porringer*.

A well-known silver expert was recently shown a pewter porringer of this type and, upon being asked by what name such a piece would be known to a silver collector, replied immediately "A wine taster or cupping dish." In pursuing the matter further, the same authority was asked what—to him—was a porringer, to which he responded by producing a cup-shaped vessel with two vertical handles, such as would be termed by a pewter collector a caudle-cup or posset-pot.

It is probably quite true to say that porringers were, at times, used for all the purposes indicated by their various appellations.

From the definition given in Webster's Dictionary "posset" is "a beverage of hot milk, curdled by some strong infusion as by ale, wine, etc., and often containing spices." In the Oxford Dictionary "caudle" is defined as "a warm drink consisting of thin gruel, mixed with wine or ale, sweetened and spiced, given chiefly to sick people—especially women in childbed, also to their visitors."

It would seem, therefore, that there was little difference between a "caudle" and a "posset," and, by the same token, one may assume that the same type of vessel would have been used for either.

In Picton's *Liverpool Municipal Records* there is listed (in Chapter I, p. 153) "One Cawdell Cupp with a top" (1634).

Webster's Dictionary defines a "posset pot" as "a two-handled vessel used for making posset." (The italics are mine.)

Porringers (as known to pewter collectors) were not normally with "tops" or lids, nor were they two-handled, although, exceptionally, both lidded and two-eared porringers are known. These latter are mostly commemorative pieces of the William III or Queen Anne periods, and will be made the subject of a separate article.

For the purposes of this survey the posset-pot, the caudle-cup, the toasting-cup and the Scottish quaich will also be ignored, and the writer will class under the generic term "porringer" all other small shallow bowled vessels, with either one or two ears.

Whether they are, in fact, wine tasters, bleeding bowls (often with gradation marks to show the quantity of blood "let") or porringers, is left to the imagination or whim of the reader.

The accurate dating of early British porringers has not been easy in the past owing to the paucity of specimens available for inspection and comparison, and the lack of any useful literature on the subject. The writer had, however, taken the opportunity of examining and making notes from every available porringer in private collections and museums known to him.

A further opportunity was recently given to inspect and record a selection of nearly twenty XVIth and XVIIth century porringers in the Guildhall Museum, London. These are, unfortunately, not on general exhibit at present owing to lack of space, but every facility was extended by the Librarian and Curator, Mr. Adrian Oswald, F.S.A., in affording ready access to the pieces and their history, so far as it was recorded.

Most of the specimens had come from excavations within the City of London, and date from a time prior to the Great Fire in 1666. The earliest type which can be definitely attributed to this country is that shown in two positions in Figs. I and II.



Figs. I and II. A double-eared porringer of XVIth century or earlier and (below) view of the base.

A P O L L O

The writer knows of four such pieces, in varying stages of condition due to their burial, and their very prevalence leads to the conclusion that they formed a definite type in common use.

In the case of three of them, at least, the circumstances of finding—in a stratum of the earth which can be dated very closely—have left no doubt that they hail from a period before the end of the XVIth century. Other items, attributable to this period, found in or near the sites, have established their age to this extent.

The metal of which these pieces are made is somewhat softer and of poorer quality than that used later as a general rule; in no case has it been found with the fine “pigeon’s breast” efflorescent patination, known to collectors as “Nature’s gilding.” The oxide forming on this particular alloy tends to be of a grey powdery nature, and is fairly easily removed.

The specimen shown at Figs. I and II is in a remarkably fine state of preservation and, in parts, still displays the original “bloom” with which it left its maker’s hands nearly 400 years ago. It was dug up in Finsbury Circus, London, and is one of the treasures of the Guildhall Museum to which reference has just been made. This piece measures 8½ ins. from tip to tip



Fig. III



Fig. III. Section of the bowl of the porringer in Fig. I (type 1a).

Fig. IV. Marks found on porringers of bowl-type 1a.

across the ears; the inside of the bowl being 5½ ins. in diameter. The ears are cast in one piece with the bowl and are not later additions. The everted rim is strengthened by the moulded ridge shown in the sectional drawing at Fig. III. The centre of the base is raised and takes the form of the “boss” more familiar in rose-water dishes of the XVIth century. This bossed centre is, in itself, an early feature; most pewter plates and dishes up to c. 1650 displayed this characteristic to a greater or lesser extent. Upon the upper surface of one ear is punched the monogram shown at Fig. IV(a).

Another identical porringer, or two-eared dish, also at the Guildhall Museum, bears the device shown at Fig. IV(b) on one ear, in the same position.

Little is known of the touch-marks in use during these early years, but the type of marks here rather indicates that they are more probably “house-marks” or “merchants’ marks” of their one-time owners.

A further identical piece, in the writer’s collection, has what seems far more likely to be a touch on the *underside* of one ear, but this is only partly visible. What can be seen of it, however, is shown at Fig. IV(c). The latter porringer is, unfortunately, only about two-thirds complete, having been found in a badly corroded condition in the stream of the Walbrook, running beneath the old Bank of England. The foregoing style of double-eared porringer is, for the purposes of this chronology, designated body-style 1a.¹

Another very similar early type has been classified as body-style 1b; this follows very closely all the main features of manufacture and quality of metal, etc., of the former type, with the exception that the bowl does not display the “bossed” centre, being an unbroken curve from one side of the rim to the other.

The only known specimen of this type was originally in the collection of the late Mr. A. B. Yeates, which he bequeathed to the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The proportions of type 1b are slightly less than those of type 1a, being only 5½ ins. across the bowl, and 8½ ins. from tip

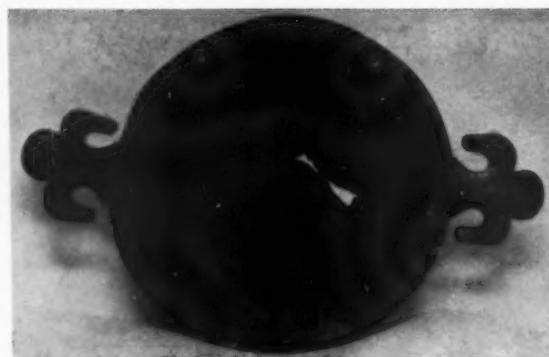


Fig. V. Double-eared porringer of type 2a.

to tip of the ears. The ears themselves are a crude representation of a cinquefoil, and are classed as ear-type 1b in the chart of ear-styles. There are no visible signs of a maker’s mark.

Type 2a (shown at Fig. V) is also two-eared and, in many respects, is similar to the first and is also not unlike some Continental examples, particularly in the shape of the ear, which is a true trefoil or fleur-de-lys, as against the “embryo-trefoil” of type 1a.

All aspects of the manufacture and quality of metal proclaim it to be slightly later than the former pieces, and one is tempted to ascribe it to the late XVIth or early XVIIth century. The trefoil ear has been used on other and later types of English porringers and this must be accepted as a true national feature, albeit rarely found.

The bowl of type 2a is slightly deeper than in types 1a and 1b and is not bossed in the centre. A raised rim runs round the base upon which the vessel stands (see sectional drawing at Fig. VI). Only two of this type are known to the writer, that illustrated being in the Guildhall Museum, and the other was recorded in detail in the personal notebook of the late A. B. Yeates. Although this latter (Yeates) specimen also has “fully-fledged” trefoil ears, there are slight variations between the ears of both pieces. The differences will be seen to advantage in the ear-type chart under the Nos. ear-types 2a and 2b.

Both these porringers bear touch-marks struck upon the centre of the base; that drawn at Fig. VII(a) being upon the Guildhall specimen, and, at Fig. VII(b), upon that noted by Mr. Yeates.

The very types of touches indicate the early XVIIth century; as both these marks are unrecorded, there is little hope of being able to allocate them with safety to any known makers.

The six-pointed star (or overlapping triangles) mark is not unlike that to be seen on a very early pillar salt at the Guildhall Museum, which the writer has provisionally dated as of the late XVIth century, the main difference, however, being the initial “A” within the star on the salt, against the letter “T” on the porringer. A fine early dish of c. 1620, with such a mark, is in the possession of Mr. Minchin, and another broad-rim dish of c. 1650, also bearing a similar mark, is in the writer’s collection.

The device at the top of the touch on the Guildhall porringer, somewhat like a figure 4 with a crossed tail, has been used frequently from medieval times up to about 100 years ago, both in this country and in Germany, and is thought to have had some trade significance, the exact nature of which escapes the writer. It has been seen on early spoons and in various merchants’ marks and trade-marks, with the figure 4 facing to either left or right. If any reader has any suggestions to make on the possible origin or purpose of the motif, the writer, and others, will be grateful.

Another porringer, of which type only one specimen is known, is classified as body-type 2b. The distinctive feature of this example is the thickened band of metal round the neck. The ears are cast in one piece with the body as in the former types. The ears (type 2c), however, are very different, each being a very clear-cut representation of a fleur-de-lys of which the tips of the outer petals touch, and are soldered to, the rim. This piece is stated to have been found in London, and was presented to the London Museum in 1915. It is 8 ins. in diameter across the ears; the bowl diameter is 4½ ins. No maker’s touch is visible,

ENGLISH PEWTER PORRingers

the centre of the base, where the mark (if any) would have been, having been burnt away.

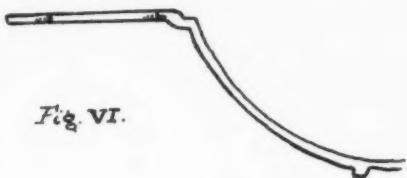


Fig. VI.



(a).



(b).

Fig. VII. (Drawn about twice actual size.)

Fig. VI. Section of the bowl of the porringer in Fig. V (type 2a).

Fig. VII. Marks found on porringers of type 2a.

The period of the foregoing types of double-eared porringers has been defined as well as may be, and dates of usage may be approximately stated to be: Body-types 1a and 1b from, say, 1450 to 1600, and types 2a and 2b from c. 1575 to 1625.

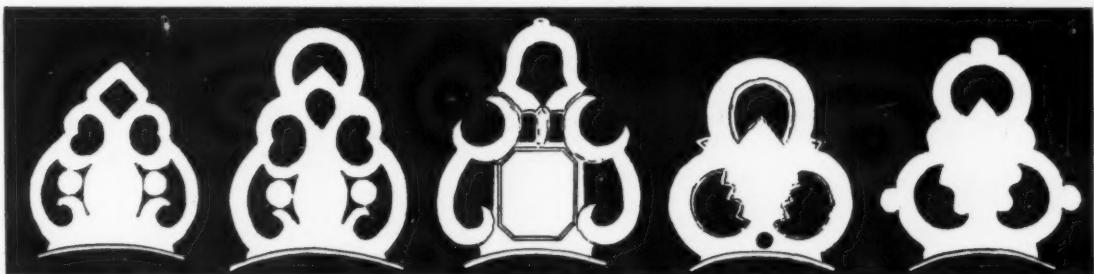
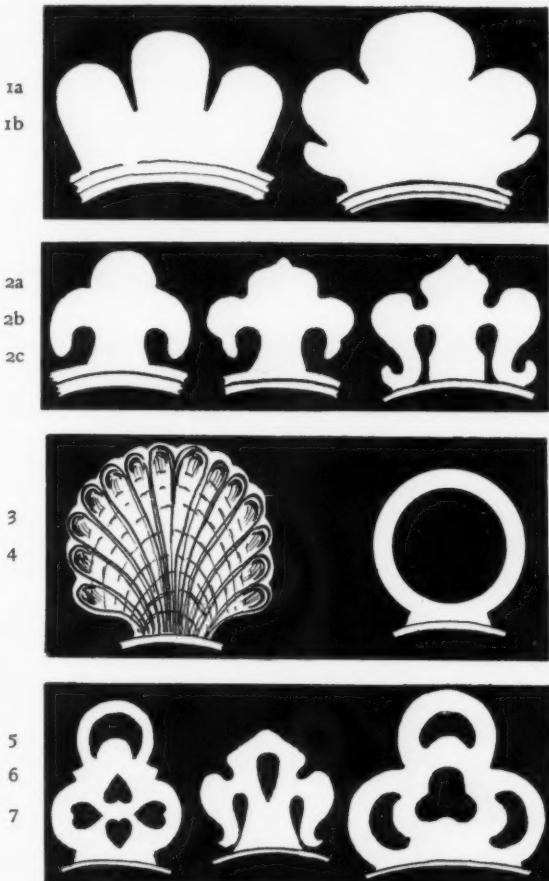
The writer is indebted to Mr. R. W. Symonds, of London, for bringing to his notice the following extract from a will of 1485: " . . . Item in puter dyschys, dobellers, saucers, j charger, olde metyll, j dousan nethe et di. pro pondere, iijss. xjd."

The "dobellers" to which reference is made might very conceivably have been the "double-ears" of the types just described.

No other types of pewter porringers which can be safely attributed to these early years have come to notice, and, for the present, it must be assumed that the single-eared types did not come into prominence until a later date—probably c. 1625.

¹ A chart of body-styles, showing all main types of porringer bowls (in section), will be incorporated in a forthcoming instalment.

(To be continued)



(Above) 8
(Below) 13

9

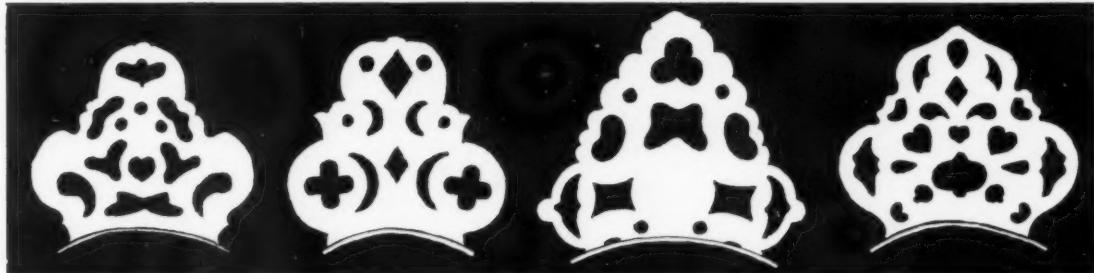
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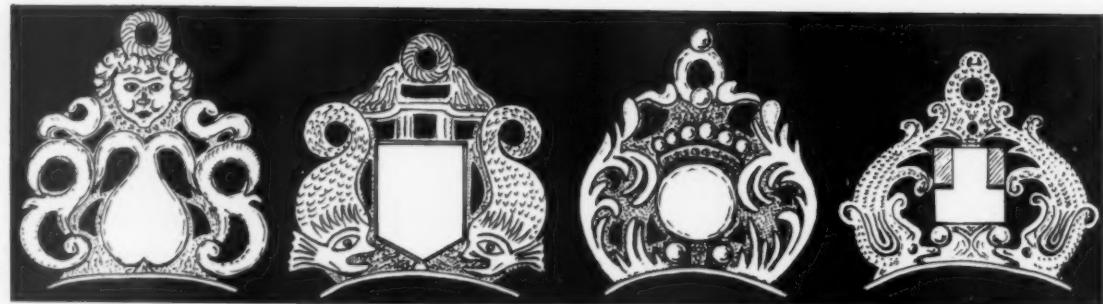
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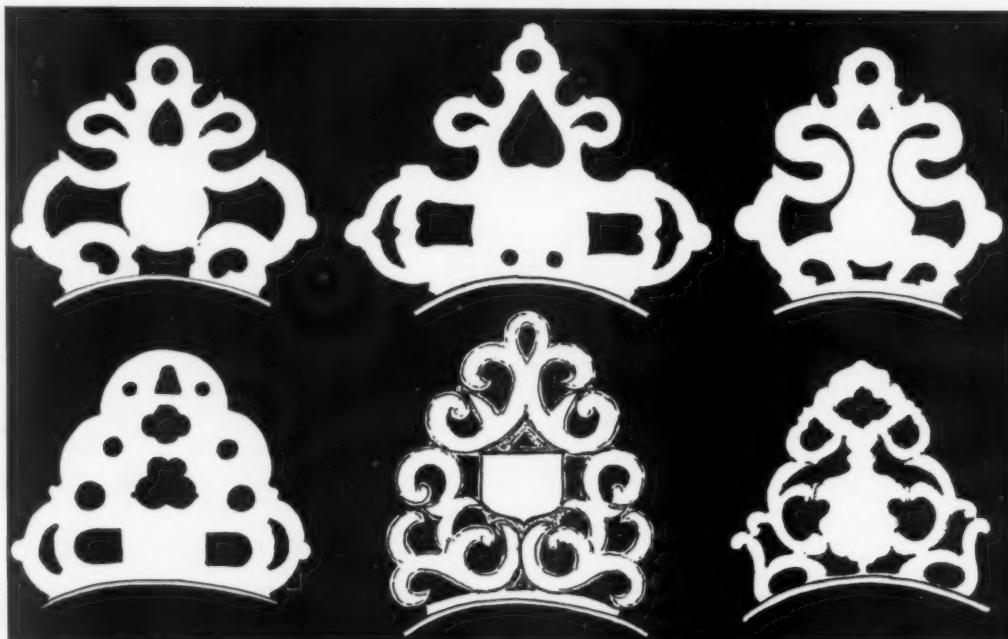
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(Above)
17, 18, 19
and 20.



(Centre)
21a, 21b,
21c,
22, 23 and
24.

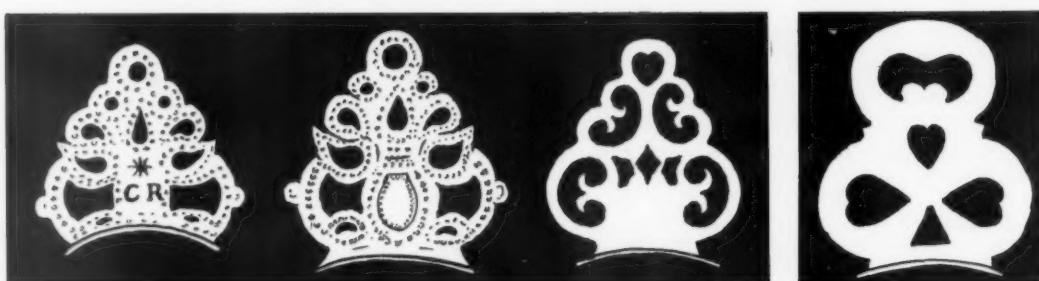


CHART OF EAR-TYPES FOUND ON ENGLISH PEWTER PORRingers
from the mid-XVth to the late XVIIIth centuries.

These drawings, made by the author from actual specimens of the various types of ears found on authentic English pewter porringers, include all the major types at present known to exist. Many of them are found with very slight variations from the drawn types, but these, although interesting from the point of view of the student who desires to carry the study even further, would, in the author's opinion, tend to confuse rather than help the reader at this stage. Certain variations of type have, however, been noted where the differences are significant—e.g., Nos. 21a, 21b, and 21c, and also 25a and 25b.

As the succeeding parts of this article are published, the attention of readers will be referred back to the types illustrated here.
R.F.M.

SALE ROOM NOTES & PRICES BY BRICOLEUR

ENGLISH FURNITURE. At Christie's a fine small mahogany winged cabinet, with glazed doors in the upper part, 56 in. wide, brought £220 10s., a Chippendale mahogany bureau-bookcase, 44 in. wide, £241 10s., and a set of four fine Chippendale mahogany armchairs, £336. Sotheby's sales included an early Georgian dwarf chest of drawers, in honey-coloured burr-elm, £88, and a fine English marquetry commode, in the French taste, 4 ft. 8 in. wide, £480. At Phillips, Son and Neale a set of six Hepplewhite dining-chairs made £52, and a pair of antique hanging hall lanterns, £30. Rogers, Chapman and Thomas obtained a bid of £140 for a Queen Anne wing armchair, covered in Aubusson floral tapestry, and £90 for a Chippendale settee, 5 ft. 6 in. wide. Robinson and Foster sold a Georgian toilet cabinet, enclosed by a folding top, for £31 10s., and an oak refectory table, 12 ft. by 3 ft., for £60 18s. Knight, Frank and Rutley sold two pedestal writing-desks, one at £32 10s. and the other at £40, and a walnut serpentine chest of drawers for £62.

REGENCY FURNITURE. A rosewood writing table, of unusually large size, 6 ft. wide, which had been exhibited at the Regency Festival at Brighton in 1948, brought £36 at Sotheby's. A rosewood side-cabinet, or low cupboard, 6 ft. wide, £155, a convex mirror, in the form of entwined serpents in giltwood, £28, and a writing-table, in well figured wood, and with end-supports, 3 ft. wide, £100. Another writing-table, of sofa-table type, in burr-elm, £85, and a Regency doll's house, with four rooms and papered walls, 3 ft. wide, £10. At Robinson and Foster's a pair of Regency ebonised and gilt torcheres made £52 10s. and a Regency 19 in. pedestal cupboard £36 at Rogers, Chapman and Thomas. At Knight, Frank and Rutley a Regency dwarf bookcase made £66.

FRENCH FURNITURE. The collection formed by the late Mr. Augustus Meyers, sold at Christie's on May 11th, comprised some important pieces, including a Louis XV kingwood *bureau-plat*, with ormolu mounts, 56 in. wide. It brought £399. These flat-topped writing-tables always find eager bidders. Although they are undoubtedly less convenient than the bureau with pigeon-holes and an arrangement of small drawers, they are certainly of greater elegance. The lack of drawers, which would be keenly felt by anyone making serious use of this type of writing-table, was often made good by the addition of a *cartonnier* or *sécrétaires à archives*. These separate pieces of furniture, made to stand on, or beside, the *bureau-plat*, are for some reason extremely rare. A Louis XV writing-table, only 26 in. wide, but in satinwood, a material against which there is a marked reaction to its great popularity of forty years ago, made £105. A Louis XV oval table, with a marquetry design in the style of David Roentgen, 29½ in. wide, £99 15s. A Louis XV kingwood *bonheur-du-jour*, or boudoir writing-cabinet, with shelves and drawers in the upper part, 26 in. wide and with the stamp of an unknown ébéniste, Coudie, M.E., £110 5s. An XVIIth century parquetry commode, in the Louis XV—Louis XVI transitional style, 38½ in. wide, £199 10s., and an earlier marquetry commode of serpentine shape, and with a Brescia marble top, £147.

A pair of Louis XVI *fauteuils*, by J. Delaunay, made £168. These had a painted decoration, as had so much XVIIth century French furniture, to harmonise with the painted *boiserie* and to further the decorative scheme of the room for which it was made. It is rare to find furniture with its original painted decoration. Painted furniture was equally popular in England, particularly chairs and settees, but it is easily damaged, and becomes shabby more quickly than polished wood. As a result, a great deal of it, probably the greater part, was, in the XIXth century, either destroyed or relegated to the attics or servants' hall, or when the framework was sufficiently attractive, scraped and then stained and polished, or sent to the gilder's. A large number of *encoignures* was made in France during the XVIIth century. These low cupboards, made to fit into the angle of the wall, are not only decorative, in filling an awkward space in a room, but have retained their value as particularly convenient pieces of furniture. In the smaller rooms of to-day they make useful cupboards for such things as bottles and glasses. A pair of Louis XV *encoignures*, in marquetry, with folding doors and marble tops, 29 in. wide, brought £199 10s. They were of unusually good quality.

More fine French furniture was sold on May 5th. Among the pieces sent to Christie's from Scotland by the Earl of Leven and Melville were a number of *bureaux-plats*. One Louis XV

example, inlaid with marquetry, 5 ft. 4 in. wide, brought 185 gns. and another, in kingwood, 4 ft. 10 in. wide, 210 gns. The latter possessed the rather negative distinction of an illegible signature. Mr. Frank Green's furniture, in the same sale, included a pair of Louis XVI giltwood *fauteuils*, with magnificent Beauvais tapestry covers, woven with figures emblematic of the Arts, 780 gns. A small cabinet, 19 in. wide, made about the middle of the XVIIth century, and with an exquisite inlay of river landscapes, again with the maker's signature illegible, brought 1,850 gns. It is true that this elegant piece of furniture had a claim to be called a writing-cabinet, since it possessed a shelf and a few recesses for paper and pens, but it seems a big name for such a small cabinet, which, at the most, could manage a *billet-doux*. Another diminutive piece was a Louis XV commode, 23 in. wide, with an additional appeal to modern taste in the simplicity of its marquetry and sparse ormolu enrichments; 480 gns. was paid for it.

Amongst the French furniture sold at Sotheby's was a Louis XV serpentine commode, 4 ft. 2 in. wide, signed by Pierre Roussel, who was received master in 1745, £58. A Louis XV marquetry boudoir table, 35 in. wide, made £58.

SILVER. Mr. Frank Green's important collection of silver was dispersed at Christie's on May 4th. It included the well-known Elizabethan silver-gilt salt and cover, exhibited at South Kensington in 1862 and at Messrs. Garrard's Red Cross Exhibition in 1915. It bore the date mark for 1581 and the maker's mark *RM*, with the gross weight of 15 oz. 10 dwt., and brought 1,800 gns. A James I silver-gilt wine cup, 6½ in. high, dated 1611 and with the maker's mark *AB* conjoined, weighing 5 oz. 3 dwt., made 380 gns. Another important lot was a William and Mary toilet service, by Benjamin Pyne, 1692, comprising ten pieces, including candlesticks, with a gross weight, without the mirror, of 95 oz. 5 dwt. This lot realised 1,400 gns. A George II plain spherical teapot, 5 in. high, by John Williamson, of Dublin, 1734, 16 oz. 18 dwt., 520 gns. A Queen Anne small octagonal pear-shaped hot-milk jug, 6½ in. high, 1710, with the gross weight of 8 oz. 17 dwt., 460 gns. A later pear-shaped hot-milk jug, by Pezé Pilleau, 1730, gross weight 15 oz. 7 dwt., 390 gns. A George II bullet-shaped teapot, 4½ in. high, by Charles Hatfield, 1739, 15 oz. 8 dwt., 150 gns. Four Queen Anne trencher salt-cellars, by George Titterton, 1706, 9 oz. 10 dwt., 180 gns. A George I plain circular sugar bowl, Edinburgh 1723, 6 oz. 3 dwt., 165 gns.

At Sotheby's, on May 19th, a pair of Queen Anne tapersticks, 4 in. high, by Edward Barnet, 1712, 5 oz. 14 dwt., £145. A set of four early George II table candlesticks, 11 in. high, 1768, 90 oz., £68. A Queen Anne tea kettle, 1781, gross weight 49 oz. 1 dwt., £105, and a George II cake basket, 12 in. diam., 1748, 52 oz. 12 dwt., £40. A set of four Victorian entrée dishes, weighing 259 oz. 19 dwt., made £85. At a house sale in Warwickshire Knight, Frank and Rutley obtained £70 for a George IV and William IV tea and coffee service, 80 oz., £17 for a George III coffee pot, 21 oz. gross, £80 for a canteen of table silver, 119 oz. net, and £120 for another table service of 177 oz. In their London rooms £75 was bid for four George III candlesticks, 119 oz. 8 dwt. At Robinson and Foster's £60 was bid for a tea-tray, 143 oz. 15 dwt., £46 for a George III teapot, 14 oz. 16 dwt., and £42 for a pair of George III sauce-boats, 1768, 31 oz. 10 dwt. At a sale conducted by Norton's, at Ludlow, a pair of George III sauce-boats, 1775, 32 oz., brought £45, and a George III salver, 1773, 50 oz., £45.

PORCELAIN. The collection of English porcelain and pottery, formed by the late Sir Bernard Eckstein, was dispersed at Sotheby's last March. The Continental portion of this important collection was sold in the same rooms on May 30th and 31st. The prices paid in March for rare examples from the English factories (recorded in this column in our May issue) prove the keen appreciation and competition which exists for our native ceramic wares. XVIIIth century continental porcelain, particularly Meissen, commands a wider foreign market than does English, and when a collection of the finest is to be sold, buyers are attracted from all over the world. Nevertheless, the two sales provide evidence that the best English ceramics, when sold in this country, can achieve higher bids than its continental rivals.

The sale on May 31st comprised ninety-one specimens from the Meissen and Nymphenburg factories. The most important amongst the latter was a figure, 7½ in. high, of a young woman from the Italian Comedy, by the modeller Franz Anton Bustelli, who was employed between 1754 and 1763 in the service of Bavaria. This figure was marked with an impressed shield, and realised £890. Another Bustelli figure, of Pantalo, 6½ in. high,

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made £720, and another, of a Chinaman, 5 in. high, £210. A pair of Nymphenburg parrots, painted in colours, by Dominikus Aulicsek, 6½ in. high, £420. Two small Bustelli figures of *putti* brought £16 each.

A magnificent Meissen group of the Tyrolese Dancers, 6½ in. high, by J. F. Eberlein, £500. This group was first modelled in 1735, and inspired the well-known Chelsea and Bow versions of the same subject. A vigorously modelled Meissen figure of Scaramouche, by Kaendler, 7½ in., *circa* 1740, £220, a "Crinoline" group by Kaendler and Reinicke, 9½ in. long, £300, and a pair of rare figures of Camels, 16½ in. high, £420. A pair of Meissen dishes, modelled with flowers, 10½ in. wide, £125, a pair of covered chocolate cups and stands, £65, and a rare "Hausmaler" octagonal bowl, 7 in. wide, painted with eight portraits of national types, £190. A stoneware bust portrait, by Böttger, the discoverer, in Europe, of the secret of true porcelain, 4 in., £60.

A Ludwigsburg figure of a Comb Maker, with another group, £52, and a pair of miniature groups of the Arts, from the same factory, £70. A fine pair of early Höchst figures of peasants, 5½ in., £125, another Höchst pastoral group, 7 in. high, £75, and a Venice "Callot" figure of a dwarf, 2½ in., £58.

CLOCKS. Collectors of old clocks have chosen a particularly interesting and rewarding field for their energies and resources. Apart from a few chosen makers, the foremost of whom is, of course, Thomas Tompion (1638-1713), whose clocks are priced in four figures, there are innumerable lesser known clockmakers whose work, although in many cases it was not far below the standard of the great men, can be had for a tenth and a twentieth the price. English clocks, during the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries, were of such high standard that they were sought throughout the world. To-day, although they may lack the relentless precision of the electric clock, so suitable for the bathroom and the kitchen, they will still record excellent time. And the attention and gentle encouragement they need is, for the collector, their merit. Owing to the register kept by the Clockmakers' Company, and to such standard works as *Old Clocks and Watches and their Makers* by F. J. Britten, it is seldom that information about the clockmakers themselves cannot be discovered.

The sale at Sotheby's, on May 20th, included some rare early clocks. A bracket clock by the French Huguenot maker, Claude Duchesne, who left Paris to settle in London in 1689, made £28. It was 14½ in. high, and had a 6½ in. square gilt-metal dial, chiselled cherub-head spandrels, and an ebonised case. A bracket clock in an ebonised pearwood case by Godfrie Poy, clockmaker to George II when Prince of Wales, £26, and a mahogany-cased clock by Richard Webster, of the Exchange Alley, London, 18 in. high, £16. Brass lantern clocks, even very early examples, usually do not bring anything like the prices realised by examples in wood cases. A lantern clock by Andrew Prime, who was free of the Clockmakers' Company in 1647, and whose work is represented in the Victoria and Albert Museum, made £24. The prices were very different for those few master clockmakers who have been specially signalled out by collectors. A small bracket clock by Joseph Knibb, 13 in. high, made £105, and another by the same maker, with 6 in. dial, cherub-head spandrels in the dial, and an ebonised oak case, 12 in. high, £480. A bracket clock by Thomas Tompion and Edward Banger, numbered 441, made £1,200, a very fine small eight-day clock by Daniel Quare, 12 in. high, £950, and a silver-mounted bracket clock by John Knibb, of Oxford, with its original engraved key, and contained in an ebonised case, 12 in. high, £1,200. Another distinguished maker was Henry Jones, who was Master of the Clockmakers' Company from 1691 until his death in 1695. A small bracket clock, 11½ in. high, inscribed "Henricus Jones, London," with striking and repeating movement, brought £441 at Christie's. A bracket clock by Jos. Williamson, of London, *circa* 1700, made £60 at Phillips, Son and Neale.

OBJECTS OF VIRTU, ETC. At Christie's sale of boxes and virtu, which included some sent by H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester, a Louis XV gold snuff-box, 2½ in. wide, dated 1763, by L. P. Demay, of Paris, 4 oz. 3 dwt., made £152 5s. and an Irish circular gold box, inset with an enamel miniature portrait of William Pitt, £199 10s. Sotheby's sale on May 26th included a Louis XV agate and gold box, painted in Watteau style, 2½ in. wide, which realised £110. The same box had been included in the sale of Sir Bernard Eckstein's collection of boxes on November 30th, 1948, when it brought as much as £460. A French gold presentation snuff-box, inscribed "From the Prince of Wales to B. Connor, Esq., 4th April, 1789," 3½ in. wide, £68, and a massive

silver presentation box, of 1837, inscribed to "Peter Matthews, Esq., £24. A Fabergé rabbit, in matrix of opal and the eyes inset with rubies, 4½ in., £26, and a Fabergé small picture frame, 5 in. high, in gold, jade and ivory, £58. A Battersea enamel box, painted with a fox making off with a goose, with another, £11, and two other Battersea boxes, one in the form of a pyramid of fruit, £7. A large pale yellow-ground enamel box, 6 in. wide, sent by Helen, Duchess of Northumberland, £38. APOLLO for November 1934, published an interesting article on "A Collection of Candle Snuffers." It is evident that anyone interested in these "bygones" would have an open field. A collection of about fifty snuffers, showing a variety of types and designs, brought only £4 10s. and a further collection of about sixty-five, £5. In the same sale a magnificent small marble statuette of Voltaire, by Jean Rosset, 15 in. high, realised £370. An XVIIth century gold snuff-box, 3½ in. wide, made £40 at Robinson and Foster's.

Auction prices for pictures will be recorded in our next issue.

COVER PLATE

This delightful distant view of Eton, by the Antwerp-born topographical artist, Pieter Tillemans, will attract attention alike for its subject matter and for the purely aesthetic qualities of a fine landscape by an artist whose rare works give him an important place in early XVIIIth century painting. Tillemans, indeed, was more than a topographical artist although we think of him chiefly as the painter of an important "View of Chatsworth" which he did for his patron the Duke of Devonshire, and for the illustrations he made for a famous *History of Northamptonshire*, for which he did nearly 500 drawings.

He was born in Antwerp in 1684, and came over to England in 1708. Here the tradition of having the great houses and historical places portrayed had long been established, and although at first he worked as a copyist of Old Masters, the Flemish painter probably planned to follow the fashion which had proved so successful for such an artist as Hollar. As this picture reveals, however, he carried his work much further than the water-colourists of the time, and we feel that here he was intrigued by the charm of the whole landscape as well as by the interest of the buildings and chapel of the famous school.

It is fascinating that the whole ensemble of the buildings beyond the famous "Long Wall," with its association with the wall game, remains to-day just as Tillemans painted them in this view from the bridge about two hundred and thirty years ago. Enthusiastic Etonians, to whom this picture will have its own especial appeal, may remember that its fellow hangs in the Provost's Lodge at the College, and will be constrained to compare their memory of that version with this painting which is now in the possession of Leggatt's Gallery in St. James's.

MODERN FURNITURE AND FITTINGS. By John and Rodney Hooper. (Published by B. T. Batsford Ltd. Price 42s. net.) Review.

At first sight it may appear curious to review *Modern Furniture and Fittings* in APOLLO. It is logical, however, for all antiques were new once and the furniture and fittings which John and Rodney Hooper describe and illustrate, will not only live happily with antiques, but consist entirely of fine designs embodying first quality construction which will make them respectively the period furniture and backgrounds of the future. In some instances, in fact, the illustrations may be criticised as being modern reproductions of what are already "period" designs.

The book, in 70 well-chosen photographs, illustrates some of the most distinguished work of contemporary designers—the majority architects, a few anonymous designers employed by furniture manufacturers who have achieved eminence with their products.

As might be expected from practical craftsmen and teachers of woodwork such as John Hooper and his son Rodney, the photographs are reinforced by superb detailed working drawings and a concise and practical text, which will enable a good craftsman to make any of the pieces described.

The book will be invaluable as a sound grounding to students, though unfortunately the standard which it represents is unlikely to be met in a furniture factory. At present and in the immediately foreseeable future, none of the pieces could be produced.

Although not representing normal modern commercial practice, this book, by raising public taste, may contribute to elevating the standard of production and so ensure that there shall be no dearth of newly qualified antiques in A.D. 2049.